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# **Lebanon's Democracy: Prospects and Pitfalls**

**By: Hadi El Amine**

**A thesis presented in candidature for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy in the University of Durham**

**The Faculty of Social Sciences**

**The School of Government and International Affairs**



**October 2011**

## Declaration

I, the writer of this research study, confirm that no part of the material presented in this study has previously been submitted by me for a degree in this or any University. I also declare that all the work presented in this thesis was carried out by the candidate.



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**Dr. Christopher Davidson**

**Supervisor**

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**Hadi El Amine**

**Candidate**

=====  
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# DEDICATION

*To my Father and Mother with love ... as promised.*

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

It would have by no means been possible to carry out the sheer volume and depth of this doctoral research had it not been for the support of so many people.

First and foremost, I owe my deepest gratitude to my Ph.D. 1st supervisor, Dr. Christopher Davidson who has been the ideal doctoral thesis supervisor. His sage advice, thoughtful criticisms, and sincere encouragement have benefited the writing of this doctoral thesis in innumerable ways. Throughout my doctoral thesis-writing period, he provided encouragement, sound advice and thoughtful ideas. Without his steadfast support throughout the years, I would have been lost.

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Lastly, I am heartily grateful to my family for their unflagging love and endless support throughout my life. I am indebted forever to them for their boundless care and transcendent love.

## **ABSTRACT**

In Lebanon, there is a common understanding and belief among many politicians and citizens, in equal measure, that Lebanon is a democratic country. This belief is not only restricted to those inside Lebanon, but also to be found in neighbouring Arab countries and among their people. In other words, Lebanon is believed to be a country that enjoys a relatively democratic political system, rule of law, and a vibrant civil society, compared to the rest of the region. However, this is for the most part a misunderstanding, and originates from most Lebanese people's view that a modest level of freedom should be considered democracy, and that a relatively unconstrained civil society means an effective civil society.

The main purpose of this thesis is to analyse Lebanon's political system and establish a clearer picture about whether the democratic claim is real or just an illusion. In order to build this picture, I have concentrated on the internal and external obstacles that have impeded the evolution of the Lebanese political system. The first part of the thesis discusses whether or not the Lebanese political system shares any of the features of functioning democratic political systems and whether or not it is running in a modus which reflects democratic values. In later chapters, the thesis moves on to examine the internal and external factors that have hindered the state from becoming a sovereign, authoritative state and thus without the necessary foundations for becoming a democratic state.

The study will demonstrate that Lebanon suffers from the domination of a militant organisation within its borders which violates the country's sovereignty and disrupts the government and its institutions from functioning properly and being authoritative. Moreover, it will reveal that most citizens - a key element in any democracy - continue to feel subjugated, unable to make their voices heard, and without a say in the decision making process.

Moreover, it will be demonstrated that Lebanon suffers from several problems. Firstly and most importantly, it suffers from the lack of an effective state that imposes the rule of law on all of Lebanon's territory. Secondly and equally important, Lebanon suffers from missing a major component that constitutes an essential pillar for the state, and that is sovereignty. Thirdly, election results are not taken into consideration as the public's electoral choices are not respected, while instead powerful elite continues to rule the country illegally. These impediments and many others lead the study to conclude that the Lebanese political system currently remains far from being considered a democracy.

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# **1. Chapter One**

## **1.1 Introduction**

Arthur M. Schlesinger noted that “the world got along without democracy until two centuries ago, and there is little evidence that constitutional democracy is likely to triumph in the century ahead” (Schlesinger 2004). Yet with the beginning of the twenty-first century, and more specifically following the 11<sup>th</sup> of September attacks, the whole world, and especially the Arab Middle East was shocked by the seemingly rapid spread of democratic movements. And it was seemingly time for democracy to become a key theme in the United States’; grand strategy which was to be promoted abroad. This type of democracy, which many thought should be expanded naturally, or by using persuasion and even force if necessary, found itself challenged by fanatical religious and political movements and authoritarian regimes in most of the Arab world. In Lebanon, however, the scene was somewhat different. The political rift that occurred after the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in 2005, and, consequently, after the withdrawal of the Syrian troops, resulted in one political camp sticking to the historical roots of the Lebanese democratic system, while another, led by Hezbollah, apparently represented a stumbling block in its way and challenged it with all kinds of violent epithets, with its leaders often describing Lebanon as a country that could not survive with a democratic system based on majority controls and minority opposition.

In this thesis, I will first provide a literature review on democracy and political culture as one of the central research themes in contemporary political science. I will then try to survey some major studies made about political culture and democracy, trying to find out why, after the Second World War, some nations came to support democratic systems while other nations turned to authoritarian regimes.

I will then review the relevant literature on the culture of the Arab world and Islam and contend that the literature on the culture of the Arab world, Islam, and the relationship between the latter and democracy deserves special attention. The literature review will focus on the fact that there is a strong historical connection between religion and

politics in the Muslim world, which reflects Islam as a religion consisting of laws that organize societies as well as individual principles. After that, I will survey the democratization process in the Arab world following the 11<sup>th</sup> of September attacks. In particular I will set out some of the promotion strategies that were implemented in the Arab Middle East, explaining how the US dealt with this issue, and the outcomes of these strategies.

The literature review will then move on to discuss the political history of Lebanon, from independence, through the war of Lebanon, leading to the post-Taif Accord, and ending with the major transitions that took place after the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri.

Finally, a specific literature review of democracy in Lebanon will be included. I will study the history of democracy in the country, where it succeeded and where it stalled, its current position, and its position in the future.

The review chapter will conclude by clarifying the overall structure, methodology, and research aims and objectives of the thesis, namely the investigation of the extent to which Lebanon is a democratic country, what are the obstacles it is encountering and what is sabotaging it, as well as what are the best means for democracy in Lebanon to be maintained.

## **1.2 Research Aims and Objectives**

### **1.2.1 Research Aims**

This research aims to investigate to what extent Lebanon is a democratic country, what are the obstacles Lebanese democracy is encountering and what is sabotaging it, as well as what are the best means for democracy in Lebanon to be maintained.

### **1.2.2 Research Objectives**

In order to fulfil these research aims, this study seeks to define the meaning of democracy and its historical evolvement. Also, because Lebanon is an Arab state, this study will also briefly analyse to what extent democracy is being implemented in the Arab world. Furthermore, this research seeks to measure the perceptions of the political leaders and influential figures in the Lebanese political system as regards the extent to which democracy is already implemented and what are the current internal and external factors sabotaging democracy in Lebanon.

## **1.3 Methodology**

In order to best fulfil the aims and objectives of this research, I have chosen to base this thesis on qualitative methodology. Qualitative research methodology is defined as a method that allows the subjects being studied to give much 'richer' answers to questions put to them by the researcher. I believe this approach may give valuable insights -which might be missed by other methods- on the Lebanese case extending from pre-independence to present day.

### **1.3.1 Research Resources**

In compiling this thesis, I relied heavily on both primary and secondary sources.

The primary resources consisted of the following:

1. Interviews: a number of semi-structured interviews were conducted with Lebanese politicians and other members of country's political elite.

The secondary resources consisted of the following:

1. Scholarly books
2. Academic journal articles
3. Other scholarly papers

### **1.3.1.1 Primary Resources**

#### **1.3.1.1.1 Interviews**

##### **1.3.1.1.1.1 Semi-Structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were used as a main method of data collection to reinforce the findings of the study. I conducted semi-structured interviews with some influential political leaders/figures in Lebanon, representing the country's various factions. These leaders/politicians are:

- 1- Saad Hariri, MP, former Prime Minister – Head of the Future Movement.
- 2- Walid Jumblatt, MP, Druze leader and the head of the Progressive Socialist Party.
- 3- Samir Geagea, Christian Leader and the head the Lebanese forces.
- 4- Nasib Lahoud, former MP, presidential candidate and the head of the Democratic Renewal Movement.
- 5- Tariq Metri, former minister, Professor.
- 6- Marwan Hamadeh, MP, former minister.
- 7- Boutros Harb, MP, Presidential candidate, former minister.

Through these interviews, I was able to collect important data on how democracy is perceived by the political elite in Lebanon and what the main obstacles standing in the way of achieving a healthy democratic system in this country are.

#### **(a). The Sample**

Overall, the interviews with the politicians conducted by the author can be placed into one category. The interviewees were not asked predetermined questions only, but some additional questions were added depending on the context of their answers.

#### **(b). Interview Procedures**

The interviews were conducted between 2008 and 2009. None of the interviewees objected to their interviews being recorded, and they happily signed the letter of consent that I had prepared.

#### **(c). Constraints**



I faced a number of constraints during my field work in Lebanon. Due to the political polarization in Lebanon and current security situation, I was not able to conduct interviews with representatives of Hezbollah and their allies. However, I attempted to work around this limitation by collecting most of the public speeches and interviews given by the opposition leaders and members.

### **1.3.1.2 Secondary Resources**

#### **1.3.1.2.1 Books**

Some of the source material supporting the secondary resource approach consists of books related directly to points discussed in the research.

#### **1.3.1.2.2 Journals and Papers**

Other material used in support of the secondary resource approach consists of published academic journals and papers. I found that accessing such sources allowed my research to include up-to-date studies.

## **1.4 Structure of the Thesis**

This research attempts to assess, analyse and examine Lebanon's political system and tries to establish a comprehensive and flawless picture about whether the democratic claim in the country is real or just a misapprehension. The research, aligning itself in this area, aims, additionally, to further our understanding of the political process in Lebanon, and find whether the above mentioned claim is valid or not. In an attempt to further our understanding, rather than just explanation, the research raises a set of research questions. The initial research questions focus on finding out if the Lebanese political system shares the structures of properly operative democratic political systems in the world.

Succinctly, the fundamental and preliminary questions which this research attempts to explore are as follows: what are the main eligible elements that consists a democracy? Accordingly, does Lebanon's political system meet democracy's standards and thus qualify to be considered a democracy? What are the internal and external factors that hindered the state from becoming a sovereign, authoritative state, in accordance, lacking the necessary foundations for becoming a democratic state hitherto? Therefore, this research can be perceived as an original attempt to provide answers to these questions through presenting encompassing analyses of the contemporary political system and political forces operating in the country.

To simplify the presentation of this thesis, it has been divided into seven main chapters. Each chapter provides overviews and analyses based on these secondary sources, while some are based on both secondary sources and primary sources collected during research trips to Lebanon between 2008 and 2009.

The remainder of Chapter one includes the literature review of this thesis, following on from this discussion of the research aims, objectives and the methodology.

Chapter Two provides a profound historical background wherein the main concepts and existing definitions of democracy will be discussed. Thereafter, it provides an overview of the various approaches regarding the study of democracy and democratization. This chapter begins by investigating the notion of democracy and the main phases it has gone through since records began. Moreover, the chapter tries to outline the main theoretical aspects of democracy along with its practical tools and procedures.

Chapter three discusses the development of Lebanon as a nation-state since 1943 when it first gained its independence from the French mandate. Moreover, it will discuss the French mandate of Lebanon, the 1926 constitution and some of its articles that respected, recognized and documented democratic principles of governance, and finally the gradual transition from the Mandate Era to the independent state. The chapter also tries to assess the way the Lebanese political system functioned before and after the civil war. Furthermore, it tries to draw a link between the operation of the Lebanese institutions and upholding democracy through examining whether the functioning of those institutions supported the democratic functioning of the state or failed to do so.

This chapter also discusses the institutional synthesis of the Lebanese political system and how the translation of the constitutional structure reflected the stability of the current model of “democracy”.

In Chapter Four I review some of the internal barriers and hindrances that have impeded the development of an effective democratic system in Lebanon. The chapter also examines how do these hindrances shake and disturb the path to democracy in Lebanon.

Chapter five focuses on external hindrances to Lebanon’s democracy. It also examines how these external factors manipulate Lebanese internal policies and institutions. Moreover, it provides an analysis of how each one of these factors disturbed the application of democracy in Lebanon.

Chapter six provides a thorough account of Hezbollah’s role as an armed organisation that functions inside Lebanon. In particular, the chapter investigates the connection between Hezbollah and Iran, and sheds light on the organic relationship between them. Moreover, this chapter investigates the way this armed organisation managed to reach the stage where it became more powerful than the state and its legitimate armed forces. The Chapter also discusses the other political parties opposing Hezbollah and how Lebanon has become divided into two rival factions, each with its own political agenda. An analysis of two possible scenarios of state governance in Lebanon is provided towards the end of this chapter.

The conclusion assimilates the various threads of the thesis. The findings of this study are summarised and a final evaluation for Lebanon’s “democracy” is supplied.

## **1.5 Part One: Overview and Literature Review**

### **1.5.1 Democracy and Political Culture**

In the aftermath of the Second World War, social scientists became concerned with studying and elucidating the reasons that made some nations support democratic

systems while other nations turned to authoritarian regimes. During and after the war, social scientists and anthropologists started to study the cultures and societies which developed different types of personalities, and which in turn can explain the support for different kinds of political programs and constitutions. In this context, in Germany, an earlier piece of research which was carried out by some critical theorists was continued by Theodor Adorno and some of his colleagues. In their book, they discussed the structure of authority in families, which they believed had led many Germans to support authoritarian politics and social prejudice (Adorno 1950). Before that, Ruth Benedict, the American anthropologist and Franz Boas' student, and Margaret Mead, Benedict's student and later one of the most famous American anthropologists of the mid-twentieth century, were the proponents of the "*culture and personality*" approach. This approach argued that members of different societies develop different modal personalities, which in turn can explain support for different kinds of political programs and institutions.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, after these pieces of work, the most important work on Political Culture and now one of the central research themes in contemporary political science was proposed by Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba. In their book entitled *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, they managed to create a theory of political culture explaining the political involvement of citizens, or lack thereof, in democratic states (Almond & Verba 1963). They "sought to identify the features of political culture that foster democratic performance" (Jackman & Miller 1996:634).

Before looking at the cultural prerequisites of democracy and what the aspects of political culture that facilitate democratic politics and governmental performance are, it is important to mention that the concept of political culture embodies a variety of definitions. Political culture, according to Almond and Verba, is defined as a substantial consensus on the legitimacy of political institutions and the direction and content of public policy (Almond & Verba 1963). Gabriel Almond set out the main ideas and summarized them into various definitions: Political Culture has cognitive, effective and evaluative components as it is a set of subjective orientations towards politics which affects how citizens interact with the political process and thus can influence

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<sup>1</sup> In the 1920s, due to Sapir's work, the psychological approach to studying culture became prevalent in American anthropology. The "Culture and personality approach" was founded by Edward Sapir, Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead. Influenced by Gestalt psychology, they believed in "cultural patterning": Culture should be looked at in forms or patterns, rather than as individual elements or "cultural traits", which were emphasised in historical particularism.

governmental structures and performance. It includes knowledge and beliefs about political reality as well as feelings with respect to politics and commitments to political values (Almond 1993). Lowell Dittmer, a professor at the University of California, defines political culture as political symbols that consists of a system, and this system nests within a more inclusive system that we might term 'political communication' (Dittmer 1977).

The citizens' interaction with the political process, or what is known as political participation, is a very important and fundamental constituent to identifying whether any political culture is a democratic one or not. Almond and Verba portray the general feature of civic culture as a varied and diverse political culture in which individuals are "participants" in and "subjects" of the political system i.e., they are *active citizens*.<sup>2</sup> Almond and Verba believe that "a successful democracy requires that citizens be involved and active in politics, informed about politics, and influential" (Almond & Verba 1963). Passive citizens, on the other hand, are those who make no demands and have no influence. Consequently, the government and officials hardly listen to them and hardly satisfy their needs. They are not only those people who fail to vote. Angus Campbell pointed out that "the failure to vote, of course, cannot be taken as a direct measure of citizen passivity" (Campbell 1962:9). He continues by stating that "there are many highly involved people who fail to vote in particular elections because of circumstances over which they don't have control on" (Campbell 1962:9). According to Almond and Verba, the passive citizen is the "non-voter, the poorly informed or apathetic citizen- all indicate a weak democracy" (Almond & Verba 1963).

However, Almond and Verba stress that the cycle of citizen involvement in politics and the elite's response to them, and then the citizens' withdrawal together, create a cycle that may tend to strengthen the 'balance of opposites' that is required for democracy" (Almond & Verba 1963).<sup>3</sup> They argue that participatory activity in politics must be balanced by a degree of passivity and non-involvement, and that having and creating a

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<sup>2</sup> The term 'Active Citizen' comes from a book entitled *How to be an active citizen*, written by Paul Douglass and Alice McMahon, 1960, Gainesville, Fla.

<sup>3</sup> Almond and Verba found that citizens in ordinary times appear uninterested in governmental decisions and activities. But if an issue becomes prominent, the citizens' demands on officials and government will increase, and if the government responds to these demands, politics will return to normal. This cycle, according to Almond and Verba, is necessary for democracy.

balance between government power and responsiveness to participation is very much needed (Almond & Verba 1963). These cycles of involvement, according to Almond and Verba, “are an important way of maintaining the balanced inconsistencies between activity and passivity” (Almond & Verba 1963).

### **1.5.2 The Culture of the Arab World, Islam, and Democracy**

In his conclusions about the reasons democratic consolidation has been more successful in Latin America than in many other developing areas like the Middle East, Mainwaring clearly set out that what has contributed to the “greater survivability of Latin American democracies, revolves around changes in political attitudes toward a greater valorisation of democracy” (Mainwaring 1999:45). In connection with this, Chu, Shin and Diamond presented a very comparable opinion in their study of Korea and Taiwan, stating that the consolidation of democratic transitions requires “sustained, internalized belief in and commitment to the legitimacy of democracy among the citizenry as large” (Chu & Diamond & Shin 2000:2). Similarly, Inglehart, the well-known political scientist at the University of Michigan, summed up that “democracy is not attained simply by making institutional changes” but its “survival depends on the values and beliefs of ordinary citizens (Inglehart 2000:96).

Lately, the culture of the Arab world, Islam, and the relationship between these and democracy, has been widely discussed. This discussion has most often been based on the fact that there is a strong historical connection between religion and politics in the Muslim world, which reflects Islam as a religion consisting of laws that organize societies as well as individual principles. Additionally, this fact has become gradually more significant in Arab culture and political life. It started to play a critical role in shaping political culture and thus, as Kamrava has described, no Middle Eastern Muslim country has really been “able to escape completely from its overarching reach” (Kamrava 1998:201).

It is noted when talking about the Arab world that a democratic political culture is necessary for any political system to survive. Lliya Harek summarized this concept by saying that “In the long run, of course, a democratic government needs a democratic

political culture, and vice versa” (Harik 1994:56). But, will such a concept ever be implemented in the Arab world? Many scholars and observers state that democracy and Islam are unable to coexist; consequently, there is no hope of seeing a democratic political culture emerging in the Arab world. By the same token, democracy, cannot be taken for granted as there is a big gap between the conceptual understanding of democracy on one hand, and the concrete application of democracy on the other hand (Al-Dakhil 2011). That gap as argued by Turki Al-Dakhil, the well-known writer and journalist, is caused by the misunderstanding of the notion of democracy in some parts of the Arab world .i.e. Arab people’s eagerness for democracy doesn’t necessarily mean that it is achievable as they are not culturally qualified to adopt and implement democracy as a ruling model (Al-Dakhil 2011). Furthermore, the Arab culture, according to Al-Dakhil, subconsciously suffers from different kinds of ethnic, intellectual and sectarian discrimination.

Seemingly, in order to work, democracy requires certain values, like openness, competition, pluralism, and acceptance of diversity; and Islamic and Arab Muslim countries are incompatible with these values. These scholars further argue that Islam supports intellectual conformity and an uncritical acceptance of authority. Therefore, Islam is said to be antidemocratic because it vests sovereignty in God, and, therefore, Islam has to be “ultimately embodied in a totalitarian state” (Choueiri 1996: 21-2). Ellie Kedourie, for example, seems to agree with these ideas. In his book, *Democracy and Arab political culture*, Kedourie was clear and unreserved: Arabs, Muslims, have nothing in their own political traditions that is companionable with the Western concept of democracy and so-called constitutional representative government (Kedourie 1992). He expressed the opinion that the institutions and values associated with democracy are “profoundly alien to the Muslim political tradition” (Kedourie 1992: 5-6).

*“There is nothing in the political traditions of the Arab world- Which are the political traditions of Islam- which might make familiar, or indeed intelligible, the organizing ideas of constitutional and representative government. The notion of the state as a specific territorial entity, which is endowed with sovereignty, the notion of popular sovereignty as the foundation of governmental legitimacy, the idea of representation, of elections, of popular suffrage, of political institutions being regulated by laws laid down by a parliamentary assembly, of these laws being guarded and upheld by an independent judiciary, the ideas of the secularity of the*

*state, of society being composed of a multitude of self-activating, autonomous groups and associations - all these are profoundly alien to the Muslim political tradition”* (Kedourie 1992: 5-6).

Bernard Lewis, the British-American historian and an expert on the Middle East thought along the same lines as Kedourie. He accredited the authoritarian nature of the Arab-Muslim world to the Islamic religion itself. In his book, *The Shaping of the Modern Middle East*, Lewis noted:

*“Islamic History shows no councils or communes, no synods or parliaments, nor any other kind of elected or represented assembly. It is interesting that the jurists never accepted the principle of majority decision – There was no point, since the need for a procedure of co-operate, collective decision never arose”* (Lewis 1994:45-56).

In a later work, - and while many Muslim intellectuals were rejecting the suggestion that Islam is an enemy in the struggle for accountable democracy (Muslim intellectuals .i.e. in Lebanon) - , Lewis reasserted this same opinion and presented some additional hindrances to the development of democracy in the Middle East. These hindrances were related to corruption, women’s rights and fundamentalist tendencies. He argued that the main challenge in the Middle East remained the relationship between those elements carrying the banner of Islam and those carrying the banner of liberal democracy. He pointed out that fundamentalists use mosques to spread out their views, and that liberal democrats were seen as safeguarding the same standards as the corrupt regimes (Lewis 1999). Lewis summarized this as follows:

*“In the struggle between democracy and fundamentalism for power in Muslim lands, the democrats, the democrats suffer from a very serious disadvantage. As democrats, they are obliged to allow the fundamentalists equal opportunity to conduct propaganda and to contend for power. If they fail, they are violating the very essence of their own democratic creed. Paradoxically, it is the western concern for democratic freedom, even at the cost of Western values and freedom itself that sometimes prevents the Muslim secularists from dealing with this*



*problem in the traditional way. The fundamentalists are under no such disability”*  
(Lewis 1999:11).

Analogous opinions have also been expressed by Samuel Huntington’s throughout his lengthy career. As early as 1984 Huntington was pointing explicitly to Islam in order to explain why “among Islamic countries, particularly those in the Middle East, the prospects for democratic development seem low” (Huntington 1984:216) To Huntington, it is not Arab culture but rather the Islamic religion which has been the main hindrance to economic development and thus democracy. In his opinion, Islam has not been hospitable to democracy (Huntington 1984:216). He argues that the “Islamic revival, and particularly the Shi’ite fundamentalism would seem even to reduce even further the likelihood of democratic development particularly since democracy is often identified with the very western influences the revival strongly opposes” (Huntington 1984:216).

Few years after, in his “The Goals of Development”, Huntington deepened and improved these ideas by demonstrating that each region of the world has its own separate as well as distinct religio-cultural core that plays an important role in determining receptivity to democratic systems (Wiener & Huntington 1994). In his later work *The Third Wave: Democratisation in the Late Twentieth Century*, Huntington categorised Islam and Confucianism as religio-cultural examples under the label of “profoundly anti-democratic” (Huntington 1993:300). Accordingly, he presumed that they would “impede the spread of democratic norms in society, deny legitimacy to democratic institutions, and thus greatly complicate if not prevent the emergence and effectiveness of those institutions (Huntington 1993:298).” In light of the above mentioned, Huntington’s essay and later book based around the notion of a “Clash of Civilisations” furthered the aforesaid ideas by claiming that the early twenty-first century will be damaged by a physical and ideological battle between both the anti-democratic “civilizations” and the West (Huntington 1997). In this well-known book, Huntington focused in particular on religious and cultural differences as a major cause of international conflict in the post-Cold War era. Furthermore, Huntington asserted that Islam in particular encourages Muslim aggressiveness toward non-Muslim peoples (Huntington 1997). He stated that some westerners have argued that “...the West does not have any problems with Islam, but only with violent Islamic extremists ... But

evidence to support this is lacking... the underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam” (Huntington 1997:209-217).<sup>4</sup>

### **1.5.3 Democracy and Democratization Process in the Arab World after 9/11**

The Cold War affected world politics profoundly. It ended in 1991, with the Soviets withdrawing from Afghanistan specifically, and from the Third World in general. This left the US as victor, dominating and unchallenged at a regional level (Falk 1993:75). As a part of dealing with the new period, the US needed to make some improvements to its foreign policy toward the region and satisfy the power vacuum and void the Soviet Union had left behind. In particular it had to develop new policies that could integrate the Arab World with both the US economy and Western political governance. But, while the challenge of adapting to these new conditions and policies was taking place, the US was aggressively attacked on 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2001. As expected, these attacks resulted in another turning point in world politics following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

During a lecture at the New York Democracy Forum, Francis Fukuyama alleged that the US had been promoting democracy in an organized and serious way for a number of decades, and that every American president had made promoting democracy a component of US foreign policy (Fukuyama 2005). Fukuyama stated that the foreign policy of the US had always contained an authoritative idealist element, and that promoting democracy abroad has been one of its goals since the time of President Woodrow Wilson (Fukuyama 2005). Fukuyama mentioned that earlier generations around the world had benefited from the US’ promotion of democracy. He summarized this by saying:

*“We have done a lot of democracy promotion in earlier generations, Japan and Germany emerged from World War Two as well functioning democracies in large measure because of American intervention. We played a large role in promoting the so-called third wave democracies in 1970s, 80s and 90s” (Fukuyama 2005:162).*

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<sup>4</sup> cited in (Isakhan 2008)

Fukuyama supported the idea of the US being at the forefront of aiding the promotion of democratic transitions, while he discarded the idea of supporting non-democratic or authoritarian allies as “we can be very unhelpful when we support non-democracies or we support authoritarian allies that are trying to hold back that tide” (Fukuyama 2005:162-163). Thomas Carothers supported the idea of the US supporting non-democracies being unhelpful. He also went further than this, accusing the Bush administration in a strenuous critique of its tolerance of, and even support for, autocratic regimes around the world (Carothers 2003). In one article, Carothers accused the Bush administration, and specifically Bush himself, who, had talked about democracy in the Middle East more than any other US president (Brumberg 2005:15), by alleging that the administration has turned a blind eye to various anti-democratic practices carried out by these newfound allies (Carothers 2003). But Paula J. Dobriansky, an expert on US foreign policy, stated that the Carothers’ claim was incorrect. In an article, Dobriansky explained the Bush administration’s position, and talked about the September 2002 national security strategy which “lays out our post-September 11 strategic visions, prominently features democracy promotion” (Dobriansky 2003:141). Indeed, Dobriansky mentioned in her article that the promotion of democracy was a key foreign policy goal of the Bush administration” (Dobriansky 2003:144). Furthermore, she went on to say that the strategy portrayed promoting democracy as a central and core part of the US and its administration’s national security doctrine, which, as a result, commits the US to helping other countries realize their full potential. Evidently, and to support her statement, Dobriansky mentioned some smaller parts of the strategy which were set out by George W. Bush on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2002 in New York:

*“In pursuit of our goals, our first imperative is to clarify what we stand for: the United States must defend liberty and justice because these principles are right and true for all people everywhere... America must stand firmly for the non-negotiable demands of human dignity: the rule of the law; limits on the absolute power of the state; free speech; freedom of worship; equal justice; respect for women; religious and ethnic tolerance; and respect for private property”* (Dobriansky 2003:141).

Equally important, Dobriansky wrote that whenever the US and the Bush administration in particular, came across any proof of serious human rights breaches or anti-democratic

practices in any country around the world, it raised a voice of opposition to such violations and sought to address these problems. For the Bush administration, Dobriansky continued, “democracy promotion is not just a ‘made in the U.S.’ venture, but a goal shared with many other countries” (Dobriansky 2003:142). In short, Dobriansky, who served as Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs from 2001-2009, summed up by saying that despite the massive demands of the war against terrorism, the Bush administration found time for and evidenced a keen interest in launching several major new democracy-promotion initiatives, and that any endeavour to “juxtapose or contrast our efforts to win the war against terrorism and our democracy-promotion strategy is conceptually flawed” (Dobriansky 2003:143).

Consequently, with unprecedented forcefulness, and after the 11th of September terrorist attacks, the Bush administration focused on promoting democracy in the world, especially in the Middle East. The policy consensus in the Bush administration, as Katerina Dalacoura argued, “Has been that fostering democracy in the Middle East would drain the pool from which terrorist organizations draw recruits in their global struggle against the US.” (Dalacoura 2005:963). In her article, Dalacoura argues that the promotion of democracy in the Arab Middle East has been pursued on a three different levels. The first level “consists of policy initiatives comprising clusters of projects to support civil society organizations and reform state institutions with a view to encouraging democratic change.” (Dalacoura 2005:963). Moreover, the author referred to the USAID programme and its extra emphasis on democracy promotion, which has increased since 2001, as a means of reducing poverty and reinforcing US security. The second level of US democracy promotion in the Arab Middle East has been dealing with traditional and public diplomacy. This level of promotion, according to Dalacoura, involved working on promoting reform and highlighting that democratic reform in the Middle East has become a central and core objective of US policy in the region. This reform promotion was a “key goal in the launching of Radio Sawa (‘Together’) and the Al-Hurrah (‘The free’) television station, which target younger audiences in the Arab world with a view to initiating them into American culture and winning them over to American values” (Dalacoura 2005:964). Reaching the third and final level, the author pointed out that, at this level, democracy promotion became an integral part of what she calls it “an interventionist US foreign policy in the Arab Middle East, epitomized in the

invasion of Iraq”, and that having a democratic Iraq means having a natural US ally and this will encourage political reform in the Arab world as a whole (Dalacoura 2005:964).

In addition, in time the response to US democracy promotion policies across the Arab Middle East in general became more organized and took the form of regional meetings which produced pro-reform statements. Reform appeared to be accepted by all political players; debates became more open and took on a freer character, and discussions became more frequent and focused. Additionally, arguments started to increasingly address many issues beyond the generic criticism of Arab regimes (Carothers & Ottaway 2005:8), while an increasing number of Arab analysts began focusing on the problems of Arab political systems and acknowledging the need for reform (Ottaway 2005:173). Moreover, the arguments on democracy have encompassed the Islamist movements and encouraged an examination of their attitude towards reform (Ottaway 2005:185-186). In his article, Gamal Essam El-Din revealed that, in response to the debate initiated by US policies, the Muslim Brotherhood decided to unveil their own reform initiative in March 2004, which demanded democratic freedoms and suspension of emergency laws imposed by the Egyptian government (Essam El-Din 2004). In the same context, and in response to the US reform initiative, a considerable amount of conferences were launched in the Arab Middle East. For example, an international conference took place in Yemen in March 2004, which led to the establishment of the Arab Democratic Dialogue Forum<sup>5</sup>. Also in 2004, but this time in Alexandria, a conference entitled “Arab Reform” took place. It was attended by Arab writers, commentators, intellectuals, and political activists and called upon Arab governments to implement reforms that would take into consideration the elimination of states of emergency in the some Arab Middle Eastern countries.<sup>6</sup> In June 2004, a conference arranged and coordinated by the United States Institute for Peace took place in Qatar and concluded with a call for the adoption of the Doha Declaration for Democracy and

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<sup>5</sup>Sana'a Declaration on Democracy, Human Rights and the Role of the International Criminal Court, 10-12 January 2004, [Available online] <http://www.undp.org/ye/reports/Sanaa%20Declaration%20on%20Democracy%20Human%20Rights%20and%20the%20Role%20of%20the%20International%20Criminal%20Court.pdf>, January 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Alexandria Statement, Final Statement of “*Arab Reform Issues: Vision and Implementation*”, 12-14 March 2004, [Available online] <http://www.bibalex.org/ar/en/Files/Document.pdf>, January 2010.

Reform.<sup>7</sup> It has been demonstrated that these conferences, in addition to pressure from the US, led to an apparent impact on many Arab governments which subsequently “took steps that signal a growing acceptance of human rights as a legitimate public policy issue” (Hawthorne 2004:13). In May 2004, the Arab League Summit, which was held in Tunisia, referred briefly, and for the first time, to political reform, and raised “the question of reform, development and modernization in the Arab world”.<sup>8</sup> Carothers and Ottaway noted that some Arab countries, like Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Bahrain, Qatar, Jordan, Kuwait, Algeria and Morocco, have improved some civil rights to varying degrees and to various levels and have allowed ‘some’ political participation to be conducted through elections’ (Ottaway & Carothers 2005:262). In Egypt, former President Hosni Mubarak’s government responded by introducing multiparty contestation at the presidential elections. It reformed the National Governing party, created the Human Rights Council, and gave greater concessions to critics of the Egyptian regime (Schemm 2005).

A large and growing body of literature has discussed the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. Some of this literature has argued that invading Iraq and ousting Saddam Hussein caused the first real tête-à-tête in the Arab Middle East about political reform and democracy. Thomas Friedman, for example, argues that invading Iraq resulted in a widespread criticism of the US, but that the critics, he continues “miss, though, that the US ousting of Saddam Hussein has also triggered the first real “conversation” about political reform in the Arab world in a long, long time” (Friedman 2004.) Furthermore, in his article, Friedman quoted and summarized opinions of commentators published in some Arab newspapers to defend his argument. In another article, also by Friedman, he claimed “Yes, there is definitely something stirring out here, but it has miles to go before meaningful changes occur. It is something America should be quietly encouraging” (Friedman 2004). In a certain sense Dalacoura shares Friedman’s opinion. She thinks that some successes were achieved like creating a greater awareness of the lack of democracy in the region; “initiating a debate about reform; emboldening

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<sup>7</sup>United States Institute of Peace /Doha Declaration for Democracy and Reform, June 3–4, 2004, [Available online] [http://www.qatar-conferences.org/arabdemocracy2007/viewlastnews\\_first.php?id=5](http://www.qatar-conferences.org/arabdemocracy2007/viewlastnews_first.php?id=5), January 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Tunisia Arab League Summit, May 22-23, 2004, [Available online] <http://www.arabsummit.tn/en/summit.htm>, January 2010

opposition movements; and making the need for change a given, accepted by both publics and governments” (Dalacoura 2001:978). Francis Fukuyama was very optimistic when he said that large cracks had been visible in the facade of Arab authoritarianism especially after the Iraqi elections which took place in 2005, and that the elections and other events meant the whole region had a great deal of pent-up demand for democratic change (Fukuyama 2005).

Interestingly, the topic of democracy promotion in the Arab Middle East then led to much variation. On one hand, it made some Arab analysts and liberal commentators praise democracy and start shedding light on the problems of Arab political systems. Furthermore, and rather amazingly, they recognized the need for massive political reform, and, as Ottaway describes, they “continued to express hostility toward the United States while calling for democratic change” (Ottaway 2005). On the other hand, it resulted in some Arab analysts and conservative commentators preferring to deal with “democracy as a foreign policy issue, asking why the United States was suddenly discussing democracy in the Arab world and what true intentions it was trying to hide behind the smoke screen of democracy talk” (Ottaway 2005). Moreover, it caused them criticize the Bush administration for using the idea of democracy promotion as a code word for regime change. Being more realistic, Fukuyama concluded that the US was perhaps the wrong agent for promoting democracy in the Arab Middle East at that point in history, and if democracy does come to the Arab Middle East it will have a Muslim and an Arab temperament (Fukuyama 2005).

#### **1.5.4 Lebanon: A Political Overview**

##### **1.5.4.1 From Pre-Independence, to the Pre-Taif Agreement**

In the wake of the First World War, which ended with the break-up of the German, Austro-Hungarian, Russian and Ottoman empires, a possibility was witnessed for the victorious Allies to redraw the political map of the world. In Europe, the defeated Germany and Austria-Hungary re-emerged, with the latter becoming the separated

independent countries and republics of Austria and Hungary. Meanwhile, the Bolshevik revolution was already beginning to reconstruct the Russian empire, which would later become the Soviet Union. The German colonies, which were in Africa and elsewhere, were divided between Britain and France as mandates under licence from the newly organized League of Nations (Salibi 1993). With the Ottoman Empire having been defeated in the War, and Britain and France having been licensed to share the legacy of division caused by the outcome of this war, it became necessary to fill the void formed after the collapse of Ottoman control.

By the spring of 1920, an agreement was reached between Britain and France at San Remo on how the former Arab territories of the defunct Ottoman Empire would be divided and shared between them. Now that Lebanon had been freed from the Ottoman Empire, the League of Nations, ratifying the agreement between Britain and France, gave France a mandate over Lebanon which was to last for several decades. This mandate, which was intended to later form the state of 'Greater Lebanon', expanded the country's borders by combining the mainly Christian and Druze Lebanon Mountains with Muslim areas, the coast and the fertile valley of Bekáa. In simple terms, it moved Sunni and Shiite Muslims into a new state that was to be dominated by Christians and Druze, making up the sectarian mosaic of Lebanon as it can be seen today. This social and religious amalgamation made the new country far more viable, but this viability did not last for long, as conflict between the ethnic and religious groups developed later. Michael Kerr argues that the "Christian communities that coexisted on Mount Lebanon have sought to preserve their ethnic difference, both in the past, from the Sunni-dominated empires, and in the present, through Maronite rejection of Arab nationalism" (Kerr 2006). By the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 1920, four months after the conclusion of the San Remo agreement, "General Henri Gouraud, from the porch of his official residence as French high Commissioner in Beirut, proclaimed the birth of the State of Greater Lebanon, with Beirut as its capital" (Salibi 1993).

With the country's independence in 1943, Lebanese political leaders, mainly Bechara El Khoury, the first post-independence president of Lebanon, and Riad al-Solh, the first prime minister, agreed on an unwritten National Pact which planned to promote collaboration and conciliation among the rival confessional groups. It was the moment that chronicled the birth of a concept called confessional democracy. This National Pact



ranked the major sects in order of population as Maronites, Sunnites, Shiites, Greek Orthodox, Druze, and Greek Catholics. Among the pact's provisions, Maronites and Sunnites were assured major leading political roles in proportion with their 1932 populations. Unfortunately, and after only a short time, the agreement faced external and internal tensions in 1948 and 1958, the former being due to the first Arab defeat against Israel and the fleeing of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homes, something which considerably threatened the already fragile confessional balance in neighbouring Lebanon. Ten years after this external pressure came internal tensions. These took place in 1958, when political antagonists from different sects were aggravated by President Camille Chamoun, who challenged the constitution in an effort to gain an extended term of office. The result was a short civil war. Ahmad Beydoun, the well-known Lebanese writer and sociologist, describes this era very well:

*“In June 1957, the second parliamentary elections during the era of President Camille Chamoun were held. These elections were not free from government interference, and led to the ouster from parliament of most leaders of the opposition - among them Lebanon's most prominent za'ims. Following this, an intense campaign began to renew President Chamoun's presidential mandate, which also provoked strong opposition from the president's rivals. When the armed rebellion began in May 1958, following the assassination of journalist Nassib al-Matni, the ranks of the opposition contained Christian members; indeed, the Maronite patriarch himself occupied, for some time, a pre-eminent place in the opposition to President Chamoun. Despite this, a sectarian tint dominated the opposition. It became obvious that a large portion of the Christian masses had rallied around the za'ama of Camille Chamoun while Muslim tendencies - attracted by the image of Abd al-Nasser - rallied around the intifada. ... The crisis of 1958 began and ended with sectarian divisions”* (Beydoun 1993).

Although the sectarian catastrophe of 1958 started and ended with sectarian divisions, it paved the way to a new period of nation-building. The era of Fuad Chehab, Camille Chamoun's presidential successor, witnessed a rise in the growth of incorporating factors in Lebanon. These included material factors, institutional factors – from the extension of state education to modernization of the bureaucracy –, and political factors, including the attraction of new groups and tendencies from the margins, and their participation at the heart of national political life (Beydoun 1993). Fuad Chehab's presidential successor in 1964, Charles Helou, tried to continue his programme but was

thwarted by a series of political and economic crises such as the Intra Bank crisis of 1966, which led to a levelling off of economic growth<sup>9</sup>, the Six-Day War of June 1967, and the crises of 1969 and 1970 (Hudson 1978 & Labaki 1993) . The Six-Day War saw another influx of Palestinian refugees to Lebanon. President Helou barely managed to keep Lebanon nonaligned during the Six-Days War, and the intensity of the fighting and accompanying tensions in the Middle East sparked multifaceted domestic conflicts which trapped Helou and his presidential successor after 1970, Sulayman Franjiyah. These conflicts were serious and complex, and their complexity and seriousness resulted in the unity – during each conflict – of overlapping factions of Muslims, Palestinians and a wide variety of leftists, all allying together against Christians as supporters of the West, rich rightists, and supporters of the status quo during that period. This set of repeated conflicts encouraged the Palestinians to enter the forum of Lebanese politics, by assigning themselves to the level of a major player. With the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) having been expelled from Jordan in 1970 during its civil war, and with a government weak enough to challenge them or and impose any significant control over them, it was the time for the growing numbers of the heavily armed PLO militia to develop a state within a state: “the civil war in Jordan in September 1970 must have intensified Maronite fears of the Palestinians considerably”(Hudson 1978:261:278). In 1972 the PLO opened its head office in Beirut and started from southern Lebanon its hit-and-run attacks on northern Israel. Israel responded with serious attacks on the PLO. These attacks, which affected the majority of Lebanese territory, were the final straw as the divided Lebanese government was unable to restrain attacks from either side and watched feebly as the devastation of Lebanon took place. According to Anthony Sampson, during the five years that witnessed the PLO’s expulsion from Jordan and the war with Israel (1970-1975) "the Christians were already arming themselves rapidly, smuggling in M16 rifles, Czech M58 rifles and other small arms they could fire, and spending their evenings in arms drill" (Sampson 1977:17).

It was on 13<sup>th</sup> of April 1975 when the first spark of the Lebanese war broke out. It began with a strike and counterstroke: gunmen attacked Christian members of the Kataib party at a Beirut church, killing several people, and hours later some Kataib

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<sup>9</sup> "Intra Bank, Lebanon's largest, was a Palestinian venture and it has been alleged that Lebanese and other financial interests helped engineer the liquidity crisis that brought it down." For further details see Michael C. Hudson, *"The Palestinian Factor in the Lebanese Civil War"*.

party gunmen surprisingly attacked a bus full of Palestinians. Months of brutal battles followed, prompting military intervention by Syria. In his paper, Michael C. Hudson explains the Lebanese war and its causes, he says:

*“It is simplistic to argue that the Lebanese conflict was essentially a Lebanese-Palestinian war. It is also simplistic to assert that the Palestinians were merely innocent bystanders who only fought back in self-defence. The crucial facts to remember are these: (a) there was a collapse of authority in the Lebanese state and open conflict among Lebanese themselves; (b) there was no effective centralized authority over the armed Palestinians in Lebanon, and (c) there were well organized efforts by external elements to provoke and maintain the conflict”*(Hudson 1978:267).

In May of 1976, the era of Syrian military intervention began. The Syrian army invaded the northern Lebanese region of Akkar and advanced into the Bekáa valley east of Lebanon. However, Palestinians managed to fight on two fronts at the same time, both inside the country and in the southern part of Lebanon. The PLO attacks on northern Israel continued and, in return, it brought Israeli revenge to Lebanon, later producing a limited Israeli invasion of the southern part of Lebanon in March 1978. Between 1980 and 1982, without restraint and without scruples, vicious militia wars became uncontrolled in Beirut again. In 1982, Israel launched an operation seeking peace for its northern territory. This operation, which was a full-scale invasion of Lebanon, aimed mainly to curb the PLO and chastise the divided Lebanon for sheltering them. Israeli armed forces reached Beirut forcing a PLO retreat. In August of the same year, and as a result of international negotiation, thousands of PLO troops were forced to evacuate from Beirut and Tripoli by sea. At the same time, a multinational force made up of US, French, British, and Italian troops was deployed to stabilize the situation, facilitate the process and "to provide appropriate assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces as they carry out responsibilities for the safe evacuation of the departing PLO ..." (Kelly 2010).

On 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 1982, Bashir Gemayel, the leader of the Lebanese Forces Militia, was elected as a president and successor to Elias Sarkis. Before the inaugural ceremony could take place, the President-elect was assassinated and then replaced by his brother, Amin. On 15<sup>th</sup> of September, Israeli forces moved forward into positions throughout much of west Beirut, prompting the White House to call for Israeli withdrawal from

west Beirut and a similar demand from the U.N. Security Council. While the fighting continued at irregular intervals, an unexpected wave of bombing took place. It happened in October 1983 when Hezbollah killed nearly 300 US and French troops, being one of the first in history who used what is called now a suicide attack (Hassan 2008). In June 1985 Israel withdrew most of its army, but left a few thousand occupying forces in the south. The Palestinian commando attacks on northern Israel were later replaced by a new Shiite extremist group, Hezbollah, which enjoyed Iranian support and Syrian approval.

Although violent fighting generally eased between 1986 and 1988, hostage-taking amid near-anarchy became commonplace. With the two wars of ‘liberation’ and ‘abolition’, between Michel Aoun and the Syrians on one hand, and Michel Aoun and Samir Geagea and on the other,<sup>10</sup> the beginning of the end of the war drew close. It was when Lebanon's parliamentarians met in Taif, Saudi Arabia, from 30<sup>th</sup> of September through 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, 1989 that they reached the Taif Agreement for a National Reconciliation Charter.

#### **1.5.4.2 From the post-Taif Accord, up to Hezbollah occupation of Beirut**

In January 1989, the Arab League Committee of Six was launched. It was decided in Morocco to create a Tripartite High Commission consisting of President Chadli Bendjedid of Algeria, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, and King Hassan II of Morocco in order to resolve the Lebanese problem. Sixty two members of the Lebanese parliament were invited to meet in Ta'if, from 30<sup>th</sup> of September to 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, 1989. Under the auspices of the Arab League Tripartite Committee and with the support of the United Nations Security Council, they reached an agreement called the Document of National Understanding (Norton 1991). The agreement stopped the war, re-adjusted the political power among the country's confessional groups of people, and called for the withdrawal of Syrian troops, which had been in Lebanon since 1976, by mandating their departure. Riad El-Khoury discussed this saying:

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<sup>10</sup> On March 14, 1989, Aoun, along with the support of the Lebanese Forces, declared a ‘war of liberation’ against the Syrian presence in Lebanon. In 1990, the alliance between the Lebanese Forces and Michel Aoun reached an end and caused a war that was called the ‘war of abolition’.

*“To end the conflict, parliament met in the Saudi city of Taif in 1989 and reached an agreement again based on proportional sectarian representation. The accord left a weakened presidency as the prerogative of a Maronite, a strengthened Sunni premiership, and the somewhat stronger parliamentary Shiite speakership, while dividing seats in parliament (and higher echelon civil service jobs) equally between Christians and other sects” (al-Khouri 2006:72).*

Although fighting had reached an end, the Lebanese were not left alone. They remained subjected to the presence of 35,000 Syrian troops occupying their territories and restricting their movement and freedom under the expedience of providing them with security. Lebanon was consequently under the indirect political control of Syria. It was also burdened by the continued presence of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, the continual military operations of Hezbollah, and a succession of Israeli attacks, all of which held back Lebanon's post-war recovery. However, greeted by the international community's quiet acceptance of Syria's military intervention in the Lebanese civil war, Syria decided to stay in Lebanon. This was in violation of the Taif Agreement, which demanded its withdrawal. Eric V. Thompson argued that:

*“Hafez Assad, the Syrian president in that era was faced with the challenge either of becoming the target of international pressure to abandon the Syrian deployment in Lebanon, or creating a perception of legitimacy for the Syrian action. It is to the latter option that Asad quickly turned and which he vigorously pursued for over twenty years. From 1976 on, Asad's government attempted to establish de facto legitimacy by framing its policies in such a way as to create, retroactively, the appearance that they were in compliance with international law and by eventually producing outcomes that were widely perceived as "beneficial" by the international community” (Thompson 2002:75).*

The Syrian troops' presence in Lebanon gave the authorities in Damascus the power to control the small country by dominating its government and planning its key political decisions so that they did not conflict with their interests. Furthermore, they had the power to name presidents, prime ministers, ministers and impose their will as to MPs should be elected (El Amine 2009). Under Syrian tutelage, the armed sectarian Muslim Shiite party Hezbollah thrived (Knudsen 2005:12). During the period of Syrian domination, and in the early 80s, Hezbollah, backed by the Islamic revolution in Iran started to penetrate the Lebanese wall by trying to implant the radical ideology of Iran

in Lebanon, especially the south where the majority of people are Shiite Muslims. After a long period filled with bitter conflicts, Hezbollah's leaders succeeded in penetrating the Lebanese culture, specifically the Shiite Muslim culture, and started to call for the establishment of the Islamic republic in Lebanon. In doing this they based their argument on what they had stated in 1986, namely that "the current composition of the Lebanese system is unfair and cannot be reformed, as it is a creature of the west global arrogance" (Qassem 2008:41). Hezbollah leaders did not find supporters for their new state idea, so they decided to put it aside. They did not, however, give it up as can clearly be seen in a book written by Hezbollah's second in command: "If it was available for our people to choose the kind of governing system in Lebanon, they will definitely choose the form of the Islamic regime" (Qassem 2008:41). After winding down their military activities against the US and Western interests in Lebanon, and against some other Lebanese parties and groups, Hezbollah focused on what they called resistance activities against the Israeli occupation of some parts of the south of Lebanon, while also building up a very large social and cultural program in Shiite areas.

However, Hezbollah, which rejected the Taif Agreement but still took part in the parliamentary elections of 1992, was the only war-time militia that did not surrender their weapons after the war. Moreover it still has not surrendered them under the expedience of defending the country against the Israeli attacks. These weapons, which Hezbollah calls its 'weapons of resistance', led Israel to launch destructive wars on Lebanon throughout the post-Taif period. Are Knudsen discussed these wars in his paper saying:

*"In the post-war period, fierce battles also erupted along the country's southern border with Israel in 1993 ("Operation Accountability") and 1996 ("Operation Grapes of Wrath") which destroyed thousands of homes (19-20,000), killed Lebanese civilians and led to a mass exodus of IDPs (300,000) from the conflict zone"* (Knudsen 2005:12).

In 2000, and after some twenty years of Israeli occupation, Israel took a historical decision and decided to leave the occupied area in south Lebanon. At that time, and while Hezbollah was busy claiming a victory, many in Lebanon were arguing that it was

time for Hezbollah to become a political party and give back the liberated territory to the Lebanese army. However, Syria, supported by Iran, blocked these arguments while Hezbollah came up with a new justification for keeping its “resistance weapons” (El Amine 2009).<sup>11</sup>

After the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, the battle for Lebanon intensified with the onset of the Bush administration’s aforementioned “War on Terror”. A result of this was that Lebanon became more polarized over the presence of Syrian troops in its territory. It was the time for a number of Christian leaders to unite in an anti-Syrian coalition with Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and the Druze leader Walid Junblatt. Sometime after the creation of the anti-Syrian coalition, the UN resolution 1559 of September 2004 was passed. This resolution, which mainly targeted Syria and Hezbollah, called openly and frankly for “*all* remaining foreign forces to withdraw from Lebanon, *and for* the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias”<sup>12</sup>. Dryly, “the Syrian leadership blamed Hariri for the 1559 resolution, believing he persuaded his friend Jacques Chirac to co-sponsor the resolution with the Americans” (Blanford 2007:104). On the 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2005, Prime Minister Rafic Hariri was assassinated by a bomb containing some 1000 kilograms of explosives. Demonstrations began to take place in Beirut, but a huge demonstration, which took place a month later on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March, led to the withdrawal of the Syrian troops from Lebanon. The anti-Syrian coalition – now known as the 14<sup>th</sup> of March coalition – started to look towards weakening Hezbollah after the withdrawal of the Syrian troops. But, in fact, the complete opposite occurred as Hezbollah succeeded in creating and leading an anti-American coalition against the 14<sup>th</sup> of March coalition. With this act, Hezbollah placed itself in the heart of Lebanese domestic politics. Iran, the Godfather of Hezbollah, found it easier at this point to move and play a direct role in Lebanon, having been sharing the supervision of Hezbollah with the Syrians from behind the borders (El Amine 2009).

Despite continual assassinations, the revolution started to yield its fruits. The government designated by the Syrians resigned and the country went to democratic elections in which the people voted for the 14<sup>th</sup> of March coalition as a parliamentary

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<sup>11</sup> Iran and particularly Syria used their political influence in the country and pressured the Lebanese government not to send the Lebanese army to the southern part of Lebanon for more than 20 years.

<sup>12</sup>The security council resolution 1559 of Sep. 2004, United Nations official website.  
<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2004/sc8181.doc.htm>

majority. Hezbollah, enjoying the substantial backing of Iran and Syria, were not happy with the results and started blocking any political and economic reforms in the cabinet, most of which was made up of the 14<sup>th</sup> of March coalition. Thus, Lebanon gradually started to enter the era of Hezbollah dominance, which decided, in 2006 – due to a period of regional and international pressure on Iran –, to fight a destructive battle with Israel.

However, Hezbollah decided to see through its war with Israel. Thirty three days were enough to destroy the fragile peace with the Lebanese, and for Hezbollah to claim a victory. Forgetting the pain and destruction caused by the war, Hezbollah began to act the victor, flagrantly flouting the sectarian tension and accusing the government and the parliamentary majority of colluding with Israel. A few weeks later, Hezbollah ministers suspended their membership in the cabinet because of the majority decision to adopt international tribunal law in the cabinet. The government refused to surrender despite the sit-in camp Hezbollah erected around Government House. The camp remained there for nearly two years. In May 2008 and despite threats from Hezbollah and intimidation from Syria and Iran, the Lebanese government decided to proceed towards the establishment of a strong state that could extend its authority over the whole of the Lebanese territory. It therefore took the decision to declare the Hezbollah private communication network illegal. Hezbollah responded directly through its Secretary General, Hasan Nasrallah, who said that “we are entering a completely new stage; the government is a gang and trying to blackmail Hezbollah, they are declaring war and I am telling them, I will use the arms to protect the arms”.<sup>13</sup> Hezbollah carried out its chief threat, got its arms from the “closed areas”, closed Rafic Hariri International Airport, invaded Beirut with arms, killed some 70 people, blocked the streets, and burnt some of the majority leaders’ homes. Faced with this harsh reality, the Lebanese Government reversed its decisions and responded to Hezbollah demands. Paul Salem argued saying:

*“Hezbollah’s armed insurrection in May, which overran Beirut and other parts of Lebanon, has dealt a further blow to the hopes of true state sovereignty in the country, strengthening Hezbollah and weakening the Western-backed government. But it also brought about a new political accord, negotiated in Doha, Qatar, providing for the election of a president after a long stalemate, the formation of a national unity*

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<sup>13</sup> A press conference for the Secretary General of Hezbollah Hasan Nasrallah on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2008



*government, a new election law, and a return to a national dialogue over relations between the state and non-state actors, particularly Hezbollah” (Salem 2010).*

In 2009, a few days before the parliamentary elections, Ahmadi Nijad, the President of Iran, said in a press conference that “If Hezbollah wins in the parliamentary elections in Lebanon, the situation in the region will be changed and new fronts will be formed to strengthen the resistance”<sup>14</sup>. The results of the election were a blow to Iran and Syria. The March 8<sup>th</sup> coalition, led by Hezbollah again, lost to the governing March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition, led by Saad Hariri, who was later nominated Prime Minister. Saad Hariri asserted his commitment to the elections results and the constitution which clearly states that the PM-designate and President alone should form a cabinet. Again, Hezbollah led a campaign to disable the election results, and thus led a coup against the project of building the state and the democratic system. The Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah was clear enough when he said, after the elections, that the opposition led by his militia retained the “popular majority” and the 14<sup>th</sup> of March coalition should forget about the elections results or forget about forming a cabinet. Struggling to form a cabinet with the proxies of Iran and Syria in Lebanon for four more months, after extensive negotiations Saad Hariri was eventually able to form a cabinet.

## **1.5.5 Democracy in Lebanon**

### **1.5.5.1 Democracy during the Pre-Independence Era?**

Lebanon’s pre-independence democratic system has, as yet, been the subject of little discussion. Nevertheless, some scholars have suggested that the independence gained sixty seven years ago did not in fact lead to the birth of democracy in Lebanon, as most believe, but rather that this came about earlier. These same scholars firmly believe that the National Pact, agreed upon with independence in November 1943, merely amended the 1926 constitution by curbing the influence of the all too powerful French High Commissioner, without, however, intentionally making any change to the prerogatives of the legislative or executive bodies or their officials (Tuéni 1993).

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<sup>14</sup> A press conference held in Tehran for the Iranian president on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May 2009

Ghassan Tuieni, one of Lebanon's foremost statesmen and political writers, has stated that republicanism, or representative government, and the creation of a "Great Lebanon" were not bestowed upon the country by the French Mandate. In an article, Tuieni outlines three major factors in support of this, discussing Lebanon's democratic system and its workings at that time. Firstly, he argues that, long before the notion of the democratic nation-state was universally established, modern Lebanon inherited various forms of popular representation. Two types of civic pact are referred to: the Dayr al-Qamar and the Antelias Ammiyahs (in 1810 and 1840, respectively). These popular proclamations set forth the ideals of political harmony so as to defend Lebanon's liberty. In Tuieni's view, Lebanon's border is related to the second element of the country's historical democracy. This border was first laid out by Administrative Council under its president Habib Pasha al-Sa`ad in December 1918, a fact that is widely overlooked. On 1<sup>st</sup> of September 1920, these boundaries were officially announced French High Commissioner General Gouraud, and two years later, in 1922, they were accepted by the Representative Council, a body elected on the basis of confessional representation. This said, we can of course see early evidence of Lebanon's natural borders in the emirate of Prince Fakhr al-Din II (1572-1635). The Prince's rule over Mount Lebanon took him to Beirut, Sidon, the Akkar in the north, as well as far into the Syrian provinces. Therefore, Lebanon is the only Middle Eastern state that can claim such a democratically defined border. The third and final aspect of Lebanon's historical democracy, in Tuieni's opinion, is the centuries-old tradition of bipartisan rivalry, which sometimes broke down into warring factionalism. This is described by Tuieni as a very significant sign of democracy. During the Qaisi vs. Yamani, Yazbaki vs. Junblati, and even "pro-Kussa" and "anti-Kussa" conflicts of the 1870s and 80s, bipartisan politics re-emerged. This occurred almost along village lines, with the creation of consecutive electoral and parliamentary alliances while the mandate was in force. It was seen again in the rivalry between the National Bloc under Emile Eddé, and the Constitutional Bloc under Bishara al-Khoury (Tuéni 1993).

#### **1.5.5.2 Post-Independence Era**

In 1941, the German invasion of France significantly weakened the French presence in the Middle East. This marked the beginning of the end of the mandate, which would finish in 1946. With Lebanese independence in sight, three major nationalist positions

could be seen in the country: Christian nationalists were in favour of retaining French protection; Arab nationalists wanted Lebanon to be annexed to Syria; and Lebanese nationalists were willing to accept independence within the 1920 boundaries, on the condition that Lebanon was committed to true independence and would work closely with the Arab world.

The 1943 National Pact, an unwritten agreement between those representing the largest Christian and Muslim communities, was born out of a settlement based on the position of the Lebanese nationalists. It facilitated a reconciliation of the Maronite and Sunni interests. As such the French were faced with a united Lebanese position to bring the mandate to an end.

A survey of Lebanon's recent political history and an analysis of the context of the civil war show how the system failed in its workings. It was, after all, put in place to deal with Muslim-Christian hostility above all other problems. This mechanical and rational design was laid out in all government institutions, with fixed proportional representation along the lines of religious groupings. With the National Pact (*al-mithaq al-watani*) of 1943, agreed by the foremost Maronite and Sunni politicians of the independence era, Bishara al-Khoury and Riad al-Sulh, the sectarian problem was, in effect, brought under control. For the following three decades, apart from a number of weeks during the crisis of 1958, Lebanese politics was not troubled by sectarianism (Tuéni 2003).

Since the 1950s, it must be made clear that, although the two traditional blocs had a wide following across the religious communities, Lebanese parties turned more and more towards confessionalism, and were increasingly the outcome of local electoral – confessional – alliances. The 1951 Socialist and National Front, a one-off coalition comprising Kamal Junblat's Progressive Socialist Party, Camille Chamoun's National Liberals, the PPS (*Parti Populaire Syrien*), the National Bloc, and the Armenian Hentchak party, was the last important parliamentary group with multi-confessional support. Its eight MPs, in a parliament of seventy-seven, took the leading role in the Arab world's first "White Revolution" which resulted in the deposition of the regime of President Bishara al-Khoury's in September 1952. This was a unique moment in the history of democracy. Never before had a parliamentary minority managed to attract such popular support, even in areas where it had no elected representatives. A general

strike was ultimately called and the Front succeeded in persuading parliament to reverse its position. President al-Khouri was made to resign, and Camille Chamoun, the opposition's candidate was elected president with almost unanimous support despite his party's minority in parliament (Tuéni 2003).

This overview of the literature on democratic mobility in Lebanese history helps to indicate that the American “democratic wave” may in fact be present in Lebanon. That is not to say, however, that democracy in the country has not sometimes faltered as the result of external factors connected to internal stability. Certainly, Israeli occupation of the south, the presence of Syrian troops, and the influx of Palestinian refugees all played into Iran's strategic objectives in Lebanon. Of course, these factors, which were out of Lebanese control, were major obstacles to the promotion of democracy. Furthermore, Lebanon had no power over these four pre-conditions (Israeli occupation, the “presence” of Syrian troops, Palestinian refugees and Iran strategic objectives in Lebanon) being met, and thus its return to independence and full sovereignty. Indeed, the four pre-conditions were dependent on the Middle East peace process, which was wrongly assumed, by many in the region, to be progressing well. Restoring democracy to Lebanon, therefore, depended upon the interested parties, all of which were either invisible or visible partners in the Taif agreement – the US, Europe, the Gulf States, Syria, and even Israel. These parties had to be willing to work together and invest in the internal peace, security and reconstruction of Lebanon. It is evident, then, that the balance of power between conflicting groups aiming at regional dominance, and not between the executive, legislative and judiciary authorities, is a key precondition for the correct functioning of constitutional democracy in Lebanon (Tuéni 2003).

## **2. Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1 Introduction**

My research on Lebanon is closely connected to the abovementioned dilemmas on the promotion of democracy in the developing world, and as such it is important to begin my analysis by looking more closely into the concept of democracy and how this concept has evolved. In other words, this chapter aims to outline the main theoretical aspects of democracy and its practical tools and procedures.

In the following pages, I provide a historical background concerning democracy and democratization. Also, for the purpose of this study, and after providing some definitions of the main concepts used in this thesis, an overview of the different approaches to the study of democracy and democratization that are relevant to this study will be given. Then, in the conclusion to this chapter, an explanation of why the theories discussed are relevant to this study will be given.

### **2.2 Studies on Democracy and Democratization: A Historical Background**

“Democracy describes the system; democratization describes the process. This rule shows us the boundary between democracy and democratization.” The debate about democracy and democratization has a long history. Demonstrably, the debate started with Greek philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato. Aristotle was a defender of democracy suggesting that, restrained by the rule of law, it was the best form of government, while Plato had many unflattering opinions of democracy stemming from the fact that he did not accept that it could provide for the welfare of its citizens (Daneels 1999).

After the Greek philosophers, many intellectuals started to write about what they thought was the best form of government and what democracy should consist of. As a result of numerous academic and intellectual engagements, theorizing and writings, democracy began, over time, to take on a completely different meaning than it had had at the time of the Greek philosophers. Moreover, it became gradually more difficult to agree on a common definition of the concept, as subsequent philosophers began to define it according to their own understandings and elicitations. For example, the Genevan philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau spoke of the hazards and hitches of democracy, concluding that democracy could only be successful for Gods and not for men (Daneels 1999). He argued that a faultless democratic government does not exist in human life as this would only happen if there were Gods governing (Read 1941). Rousseau's argument agreed with what John Locke had argued earlier, emphasizing the notion of consent by saying that any civil government depends on the consent of those who are governed, which may be withdrawn at any time (Locke 1690). On the one hand, John Stuart Mill saw democracy as an important element in free human development (Sorensen 1993), but, on the other he feared what he called false and full-fledged democracy (Mill 1861). Hobbs was apprehensive about democracy and the unnecessary majority-rule, believing that the only way to protect humans and their lives and properties was to consolidate the power of the ruler. Meanwhile, De Tocqueville was anxious about the tyranny of the majority (Tocqueville 1998).

The meanings and the usages of democracy changed in an extremely noteworthy way by the turn of the 20th century, and especially after the start of the Cold War. A new body of ideas and thought on democracy came into sight and it became "a part of the vocabulary of real politics as a way of distinguishing between the free world and communism" (Grugel 2002). Most scholars continued to look at democracy from a normative point of view while very few adopted an empirical or a cross-cultural approach in the study of democracy.<sup>15</sup> During this time, the good of societies and humans was still the focus of studies, but little was done to address how the ideal state of affairs could be reached. Habermas and his colleagues at the Frankfurt school in

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<sup>15</sup> The cross-cultural approach observes how different cultures act towards one another, their similarities, their differences, and how well they tend to get along or do not get along.

Germany as well as Von Hayek of the Austrian school are typical examples of scholars whose work demonstrated the latter trend. Douglas Kellner wrote on Habermas:

*“Habermas sketched out various conceptions of democracy ranging from Greek democracy to the forms of bourgeois democracy to current notions of democracy in welfare state capitalism. In particular, he contrasted the participatory democracy of the Greeks and radical democratic movements with the representative, parliamentary bourgeois democracy of the 19th century and the current attempts at reducing citizen participation in the welfare state. Habermas defended the earlier "radical sense of democracy" in which the people themselves would be sovereign in both the political and the economic realms against current forms of parliamentary democracy. Hence, Habermas aligns himself with the current of "strong democracy" associated with Rousseau, Marx, and Dewey”* (Kellner 2000:2).

It was principally in the US that we first saw a more detailed and empirical study of democracy. Here an examination and analysis of the reasons behind why voters in a democratic culture such as that in the US voted in a certain way was the main focus of study. This line of investigation quickly became the cornerstone upon which methodologies used in future scholarship on democracy were based. Lazarsfeld, Berelson, Campbell, Almond and Vebra were among those scholars who upheld this trend, analysing the voting behaviour of Americans and further researching US democracy. Voter turn-out (the percentage of eligible voters who cast their ballot in an election), citizenry, party affiliation, issue voting, and cultural and socio-economic factors are among the variables derived from the work of the scholars outline above. These findings were subsequently used by other scholars including Lipset, V. O Key, Huntington, Eckstein, Lane, Rustow, and Dahl. Of course we must not forget the clear impact on the work of these scholars of prior studies by intellectuals such as Weber, Marx, de Tocqueville, and Bruke (Daneels 1999).

It was not until the 1950s that research on democracy ceased being exclusively conducted by Western scholars and about the West. This exclusivity could, as Huntington argued, have been attributed to the fact that studies in political science were more developed in the Western world, where, indeed, democracy was more developed. However, the mid-seventies saw an increasing interest in democratic development in the Third World (Daneels 1999). Two main reasons may explain this:

1. Regions in the Third World increasingly began to call for democratization and more and more scholars studying this process came to view it as a feasible alternative to the existing authoritarian or totalitarian systems.
2. With the collapse of Soviet Russia the idea of the Western style of government came to be seen as more viable; it was felt to be more adept at addressing the people's political, social, economic and existential needs. This did not, however, signal that those studying the Third World had embraced Western thinking and political ideas wholesale. In the majority of cases the Western democratic model was examined in the context of the Third World, its cultures and its settings. A very few intellectuals did, though, unconditionally embrace the Western model, but they were met with a negative reception in local academic circles, which accused them of being the agents of Western cultural imperialism. The debate about whether or not to embrace the Western democratic model is still very much current among local thinkers.

A growing body of literature on democracy in the Third World ties in well with the three waves of democratization described by Samuel Huntington in *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (1991). In this work, Huntington describes the first wave as having started in 1828 and ended in 1942. He sees this wave as being associated with the Pax-Britannica.<sup>16</sup> The second wave of democratization began in 1943, ending more than thirty years later in 1974-5. During this time, a more democratic style of government was embraced by some countries, including Germany, Italy, Japan and later Brazil and Argentina. The key player in these countries' democratization was, in Huntington's view, the US. Finally, Huntington describes the third wave as having started in 1975. This period saw the inclusion of many more countries, especially in southern European and South America, in the democratic world (Daneels 1999).

In short, then, since the time of the Greek philosophers, scholars looking at democracy and democratization have made countless attempts to reach an ideal democratic system

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<sup>16</sup> This was a period of relative peace in Europe (1815-1914) when the British Empire controlled most of the key naval trade routes and enjoyed unchallenged sea power. It refers to a period of British imperialism after the 1815 Battle of Waterloo, which led to a period of overseas British expansionism. Britain dominated overseas markets and managed to influence and almost dominate the Chinese markets after the Opium Wars.



and solve the various problems and paradoxes encountered. For example, numerous studies have attempted to deduce the requisites and prerequisites needed for a democratic system to take hold. Various analyses have been carried out so as to ascertain what has contributed to a successful democratic system in some countries when this has not been the case in others. Furthermore, it has been questioned why certain factors, be they socio-economic, cultural, religious, or class based, have spurred on the democratic transition in some countries, when these may have obstructed democratic change in others. Certain other scholars have focussed on analysing voting behaviour, attempting to deduce how far voting is key to political development and democratization on the one hand, and what role the voter plays in electing representatives whose actions echo the public's will on the other (Daneels 1999).

Regardless of which aspect of democracy scholars have focussed on, two salient thoughts can be outlined. The first concentrates on the fluid definition of democracy which has changed and evolved over time as different thinkers have analysed and defined it. The second considers that intellectuals, and particularly twentieth century intellectuals, have not apportioned blame to the inherent nature of democracy when problems implementing it have been encountered. Instead they have blamed the absence or failure of democracy on, among other things, culture, class culture, economic limitations, pragmatic difficulties facing the state, and the imperfect nature of its citizens and/or rulers, who may have behaved recklessly or unreasonably (Daneels 1999). We shall discuss these reasons for democratic failings in greater depth later in this chapter.

## **2.2.1 Definitions**

The main concepts which will be defined below are: democracy, and democratization.

### **2.2.1.1 Democracy**

As mentioned, 'democracy' is the exact translation of two words, originally Greek, and its literal meaning is the "power of people". All scholars conform on this translation of

Democracy, but not ahead of this end. Obviously, a number of important and substantial disagreements take place regarding what democracy entails. It is possible that all intellectuals, academics and masses are familiar with the general meaning of democracy, but not all are familiar with concepts such as: justice, rule of law, effective participation, equality, majority rule, minority rights, judicial review, fair and free elections, and the separation of powers. Perhaps no one in actuality knows how to approach democracy perfectly, but some accept that it involves these basic principles. According to Karl Popper, democracy is a system whereby governments can be changed peacefully (Popper 1999). Robert Dahl was helpful in defining democracy as a political system. He defined democracy as a system in which the people participate in the selection of their political leaders. Dahl emphasized the responsiveness of the government to the preferences of its citizens, considered as political equals, as a key characteristic for democracy (Sorensen 1993). Joseph Schumpeter defined democracy as a political method and a mechanism for choosing our political leaderships (Sorensen 1993). E.P. Thompson saw democracy as a “process set in motion without anyone knowing for certain where it is going to end” (Lindberg-Hansen 1994). Some have said that there are social, economic, and cultural prerequisites to reach democracy, others, like Tatu Vanhanen, believed that democracy is a part of human evolution (Vanhanen 1997).

Taking into consideration and not ignoring the fact that they weren't able to agree on a common definition of democracy, some scholars managed to arrive at a consensus that highlighted the importance of democracy (Daneels 1999). The famous Arend Lijphart argued that democracy's definition is a government by the people and also, in President Lincoln's famous words, as 'government for the people' - that is, government in accordance with the people's preferences (Lijphart 1984). While James Bryce, the British jurist, historian and politician demonstrated that “the trend toward democracy now widely visible is a natural trend, due to the general law of social progress” (Huntington 1991:194). Jeremy Bentham, the known British jurist, philosopher, and legal and social reformer stipulated and stressed on the importance of democracy and argued that it was the best form of government to arrive at the greatest happenings for the greatest number of people (Bentham 1830). Robert Dahl was explicitly outspoken and discussed clearly the importance of democracy (Dahl 1998). In his famous book

*“On Democracy”*, Dahl talked about the “benefits that make democracy more desirable than any feasible alternative to it (Dahl 1998):

- 1- Democracy helps to prevent government by cruel and vicious autocrats.
- 2- Democracy guarantees its citizens a number of fundamental rights that nondemocratic systems do not, and cannot, grant.
- 3- Democracy insures its citizens a broader range of personal freedom than any feasible alternative to it.
- 4- Democracy helps people to protect their own fundamental interests.
- 5- Only a democratic government can provide a maximum opportunity for persons to exercise the freedom of self-determination - that is, to live under laws of their own choosing.
- 6- Only a democratic government can provide a maximum opportunity for exercising moral responsibility.
- 7- Democracy fosters human development more fully than any feasible alternative.
- 8- Only a democratic government can foster a relatively high degree of political equality.
- 9- Modern representative democracies do not fight wars with one another.
- 10- Countries with democratic governments tend to be more prosperous than countries with non-democratic governments.

Dahl ended with conviction saying that with such advantages, democracy has a far better chance of success than any other alternative system of government.

Having defined, above, the concept of democracy, and having clarified that the same concept is non-static, in continual motion, and characterized by a dynamic and interactive nature, and despite the different and complex interpretations of democracy, I believe that it is important to end this section by stressing that democracy necessarily

involves a certain level of public participation. In his article “Democracy and citizens: Patterns of political change”, Russell J. Dalton argued:

*“Democracy requires an active citizenry, because it is through discussion, popular interest, and involvement in politics that societal goals should be defined and carried out in a democracy. Without public involvement in the process, democracy lacks both its legitimacy and its guidance force.” He continues, “A major goal of democratic societies is to expand citizen participation in the political process and thereby increase popular control of political elites” (Dalton 1996:5-6).*

Moreover, the political sociologist, Seymour Martin Lipset, also wrote on the importance of public participation. In his article “some social requisites of democracy”, he identified democracy as being a social apparatus in which the problems of decision-making amongst disagreeing social groups can be resolved:

*“...Democracy (in a complex society) is defined as a political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing the governing officials. It is a social mechanism for the resolution of the problem of societal decision-making among conflicting interest groups which permits the largest possible part of the population to influence these decisions through their ability to choose among alternative contenders for political office... this definition implies a number of specific conditions: (a) a "political formula," a system of beliefs, legitimizing the democratic system and specifying the institutions parties, a free press, and so forth-which are legitimized, i.e., accepted as proper by all; (b) one set of political leaders in office; and (c) one or more sets of leaders, out of office, who act as a legitimate opposition attempting to gain office” (Lipset 1959:71).*

Lastly, Karl Popper clarified the relationship between democracy and citizens. He argued:

*“Democracy as such cannot confer any benefits upon the citizen and it should not be expected to do so. In fact democracy can do nothing - only the citizens of the democracy can act (including, of course, those citizens who comprise the government). Democracy provides no more than a framework within which the citizens may act in a more or less organised and coherent way” (Popper 1963).*

To sum up, the above quotes lead us to ask both obvious and axiomatic questions regarding the case of Lebanon. For example, can the active citizenry which Dalton discussed be identified in Lebanese democracy? In another words, do Lebanese citizens participate in the political process in a way which makes them influential enough to act and become a “guidance force” of Democracy? Indeed, the role of the Lebanese citizens and their effectiveness in Lebanon and in the Lebanese political life will be discussed in depth later in this thesis.

### **2.2.1.2 The Epistemology of Democracy**

Further to these definitions of democracy, a further question must be asked: What are the fundamentals or building blocks of a successful democracy? We do not magnify or overstate if we argue that since the earliest period of written history, the question of who ought to rule and how has been a major debate of mankind. Aristotle put a particular emphasis on the composition of social parts to explain a political system’s prevailing type (Barker 1961:116). He referred to the different types of society as different social classes, occupations and status groups. He noticed the impact of social composition or class structure as the real source of the difference between oligarchy and democracy. Alex de Tocqueville also argued that there was a direct relationship between democracy and the equality of people’s economic and social condition. He noticed a great deal of “general equality of condition among the people” in democracies, although, for him, law and political institutions were essential in shaping the populace’s attitudes toward equality and democracy (Tocqueville 1956).

Some theorists have attempted to explain the genealogy of various political systems and their relationships with democratic norms with discourse on modernization. According to them, democracy has “historically risen long with capitalism and in casual connection to it”. (Schumpeter 1950). In his book *On Democracy*, Robert A. Dahl argued that “Democracy and market-capitalism are like two persons bound in a tempestuous marriage that is riven by conflict and yet endures because neither partner wishes to separate from the other” (Dahl 1998:166). Moreover, Dahl found that in the long run “market-capitalism has typically led to economic growth; and economic growth is

favourable to democracy” (Dahl 1998:167). Analogously, some scholars shared Dahl’s point of view and envisaged that modern democracy can only occur under capitalist development (Lipset 1993). Lipset argued that the notion of capitalism is the source of democracy. His opinion was strengthened by many works by certain development economists such as Walt Rostow, who identified a lineal pathway for economic development along defined ‘stages’, as they were termed, until capitalism was achieved (Grugel 2002). Others like Ian Roxborough argued that democracy appears in those societies that are able to replicate the original transition to capitalism (Roxborough 1979). Max Weber presented a sociological method that connects political economy, Protestantism, bureaucratic rationalism and democracy (Weber 1991). He argued that bureaucracy goes along with democracy, making the state dependent upon it as economic and social differences are blurred and the economic complexity of modern civilization imposes more complex administrative tasks upon the modern state and even businesses (Weber et al 1978). We may say with confidence that capitalism in the West has favoured market growth. The rise of a capitalist bourgeoisie, an industrial working class, and with these a tangible middle class, has been the result. All of these classes create and stimulate the development of Western democracy. However, because capitalism inherently exploits and monopolises it cannot be as profitable in the Third World. Furthermore, Karl de Schweintiz argued that the Euro-American route of democracy has been a “function of an unusual configuration of historical circumstances which cannot be repeated” (Schweinitz 1964). When comparing the democratization of Western countries with that of developing countries, and if we work on the basis that only the first part of de Schweintiz’s statement is true, we should recognise the need to carefully grasp the contexts involved. In this way, Barrington Moore has suggested that parliamentary democracy, communism, and fascism were the result of a specific set of circumstances that were peculiar to certain historical phases (Moore 1993), and these circumstances, both national and international, have drastically altered since the birth of Western democracy.

In short, the situations that gave rise to Western democracy do not rule out a universal adoption of this mode of government, but neither do they indicate that a different democratic model could not occur in different circumstances.

### **2.2.1.3 Concepts of Democracy**

As mentioned earlier, democracy and democratization, with all of their related issues and topics, are always branded and categorised by their dynamic and continually active nature, which makes it hard to provide a final, timeless and typical definition. Accordingly, it is essential to be aware that studying and researching such a field (Humanities in general), requires one to consider the actual and intrinsic rights and wrongs of any issue especially if it is challenged by different and even totally opposite views.

Academic or elite debates are of course not the only forums in which democracy is discussed. It is also considered as an important issue by people and many societies as a whole. Over time, this has meant that the term ‘democracy’ has come to be used in an astonishing number of ways. In other words, Democracy as a term and concept are no more monopolized, but has become like an essential commodity for everyone. People debate it, each in their own way, within the family, in their communities, in their offices, in their cultural and social seminars, and at their gatherings. In fact, these leads us to say that as modern societies grow more open and free, democracy will become a more and more noticeable and important part of their demands.

Moreover, Democracy and democratization are the two concepts around which our discussion is structured. In a certain sense, democracy as the idea of self-rule, “the people, the many, the multitude” (Popper 1963), has taken on too many definitions with the result that it has become abstract. Democratization, the process by which the concept of democracy is established, has a number of methods and schemes. We cannot discount either the multiple definitions of democracy or the different methods of implementing it. A fluid yet anchored definition of democracy is therefore required, leading to an understanding of the democratization which follows as a long term process of social construction (Whitehead 2002). It seems fitting, therefore, to view democratization as a process of social re-construction whereby certain developments (e.g. structural) are brought to the main social (gender, class, ethnicity, religion, and

nationality), economic (production methods, income generation, right to possess and taxation) and political institutions. With these developments the foundations of a situation where the state and the people work together as democratic equals in a lasting way can be laid.

First, I need to define democracy based on its theoretical grounds, as this will help lead to the answer of what we mean by democracy. In this chapter, by exploring the different forms and models of democracy, I aim to broaden the definition of democracy, so as to reach a more well-matched and flexible model for those countries seeking to apply it properly. In this chapter I will also try to survey current theories of democracy and the process of democratization. By doing so, we will optimistically reach a firm and solid groundwork for the assessment of the Lebanese procedure of democratization and find out whether or not the democratization process in this country has actually occurred. This will help us to discover what is hindering and/or sabotaging Lebanese democracy, or if indeed democracy can be applied in Lebanon at all. In addition, we cannot simply rely on the establishment of modern and some democratic institutions in Lebanon. This will indeed make up only a part of our assessment, while the remainder will focus on the conceptual and structural dimensions of the Lebanese state and its political and social structure, as well as the ramifications resulting from these.

Furthermore, a self-styled and self-proclaimed democracy or the functioning and performance (in theory sometimes) of some democratic basics, such as holding regular elections, do not grant the appropriate grounds for one to believe and judge that a certain government or system is running democratically, especially if such an election happens in the presence of an illegal weapons, foreign intervention and/or bribery and vote buying. We must therefore distinguish between two models, one involving a number of seemingly democratic overhauls of political power and the other involving a self-supporting and deeply-ingrained democratic system. In the former, we see political actors working together in a potentially unstable situation in order to preserve the existing state of affairs and interest-based system. In the latter, on the other hand, we see agreement between social bodies and politicians, which protects the workings of democracy. It should now be questioned, then, whether particular criteria or one overarching theory can distinguish between democratic and non-democratic states.



The rhetoric of several regimes shows how operating a genuine democracy is more difficult than simply claiming to be one. As illustrated in Dahl's argument, some leaders claim that their regimes are really a special type of democracy that is superior to other sorts. He wrote about Lenin and quoted him: "Proletarian democracy is a million times more democratic than any bourgeois democracy; Soviet government is a million times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic" (Dahl 1998:100).

Perhaps it is also necessary that this research should engage the application of general factors to the concept of democracy as this will judge whether Lebanon is a real democracy, semi democracy or none of them. David Beetham, in his book *The Legitimation of Power*, explained democracy as a method of decision making about collectively binding rules and policies over which the people carry out control (Beetham 1991). Beetham argues that "the most democratic arrangement is that where all members of the collectivity enjoy effective equal rights to take part in such decision-making directly" (Beetham 1991). Frank Cunningham declares that "democracy is of unlimited scope which goes beyond political relations of public and government leaders" (Cunningham 2001). He explains that the "notion of democracy is appropriate to all modes of human association: the family, industry, religion, or any other site of extensive and enduring mutually affecting interactions among people" (Cunningham 2001). Moreover, John Dewey demonstrates that "temporal and local diversifications are two prime marks of political organisations." Thus, the attempts of any society to regulate its common affairs, which are the core of political democracy, are experimental and will differ widely from one era to another and from place to place. Thus, "democratic progress" or "inhibiting regress" depends on a number of factors: socio-cultural (the people), economic, those pertaining to security (politicians, government), etc. Because these factors differ, the relevant political bodies, policies and practises also differ (Pedram 2007). Here, we must ask the question: Will there be any "democratic progress" if a so-called democratic country was subject to intervention from another country, and in a way subject to control by a local agent or proxy for that country/countries? And here, will the people exercise control over the rules and policies? Perhaps it is clear that any visible "democratic progress" will not take place, and the people, in such a case, will not be 'ruling' or 'controlling' in any obvious sense of the terms (Schumpeter 1976).

However, in order to demonstrate the absolutely necessary components of democracy as the leading and central conceptual and institutional practice of contemporary ideology starting from the end of Cold War, it is necessary to provide a less technical definition. Although such a definition might not be enough and prove too challenging and demanding, the lack of standards and minimums will result in the dilemma remaining a dilemma. In his book *“Democratization, Theory and Experience”*, Laurence Whitehead argues that the technical or practical definition is scarce because it does not consider the inevitability of the teleological component of democracy which is what gives it moving energy. It is also too demanding and challenging because in reality existing democracies cannot be expected to conform consistently to the minimum standards that it specify (Whitehead 2002).

Professor Philippe C. Schmitter, the Emeritus of the Department of Political and Social Sciences at the European University Institute, studied the existing beliefs on what democracy means (Schmitter 1986). In the book he edited, *Transition from the Authoritarian Rule*, Schmitter managed to differentiate between the concepts, procedures, and operative principles of democracy. In his view, a democratic system is, at the “conceptual level”, characterised by the existence of a large representation of the populace, who may hold those they elect accountable via the elects’ willingness to compete for power and work with the citizens. The existence of “democratic procedures” is essential for the proper functioning of a democratic system, yet alone they are not enough to ensure this. Lastly, “operative principles” of democracy are used to control the system and ensure that it continues to function in the long term. The work of Schmitter and Karl helps us to reach a better understanding of these levels. Not only did they summarize Robert Dahl’s seven “procedural minimum” conditions for democracy, they also included the addition of a further two conditions, thus demonstrating the progression in this field of study since Dahl’s initial study. These conditions are:

I. Control of government decisions about policy is constitutionally vested in public officials.

II. Elected officials are chosen in frequent and fairly conducted elections in which coercion is comparatively uncommon.

III. Practically all adults have the right to vote in the election of officials.

IV. Practically all adults have the right to run for elective offices in government.

V. Citizens have a right to express themselves without the danger of severe punishment on political matters broadly defined.

VI. Citizens have a right to seek out alternative sources of information. Moreover, alternative sources of information exist and are protected by law.

VII. Citizens also have the right to form relatively independent associations or organizations, including independent political parties and interest groups.

VIII. Popularly elected officials must be able to exercise their constitutional power without being subjected to over-riding (albeit informal) opposition from unelected officials.

IX. The polity must be self-governing; it must be able to act independently of constraint imposed by some other overarching political system (Schmitter and Karl 1993).

According to Schmitter and Karl, minimum procedures reflect the actual way in which democratic systems function. They form the people's willing and participant agreement to a more onerous and conditional arrangement by the contingent agreement of political actors who should behave according to given conditions (Schmitter and Karl 1993). Of course, it could be debated that the measures mentioned in the earlier section are both too accurate and too brief. They are too accurate because they point out that there was no democracy before universal adult suffrage, for example: Switzerland became a democratic state in 1971 when women got the right to vote in federal elections and stand for parliament after a national referendum. But this opinion is not seen as credible

in most people's eyes. The argument is flawed because it does not satisfactorily protect the ideal of democracy: highlighting public accountability and decision-making processes might result in the outcomes being overlooked (Beetham 1994:76).

If we admit to these less procedural measures and compare them with reality, i.e. the subject of our case study, Lebanon, we very soon realize that five out of nine of the above mentioned measures hardly work and are not valid in practice. We should mention that constitutionally these measures are valid as they are, in a certain sense, mentioned and approved in the constitution of Lebanon. Nevertheless, in practice they are scarcely implemented. Measures I and III are fairly applicable, as is measure II to a degree and depending on the province. In measure III's case, all Lebanese citizens from the age of 21 can vote in the general parliamentary and municipal elections, although debates over the new electoral law are considering lowering the voting age from 21 to 18. With regard to measure II, elected officials are chosen in frequent and fairly conducted elections only in some parts of the country. With the significant presence of weapons in the southern part of the country, not many people feel brave enough to vote for anyone who opposes the de facto armed militias. And this can only be considered if any opposition member was allowed to run for a position or have anyone representing him in the constituencies and polling centres in the first place. Notably, measure IV stipulates that practically all adults should have the right to run for elective offices in the government. In the Lebanese constitution this is guaranteed as no particular specification is needed apart from judicial positions and some other posts which require a certain level of education.

Equally, measures V and VI provide the citizens with the minimum rights to self-expression, freely obtained information, and the freedom to establish political parties. Again, according to the parliamentary legislation or institutional practices in Lebanon, these rights are practically implemented and respected to a limit. Lebanese reality today shows that the implementation of democratic measures and values are seemingly better than during the previous era (Syrian intervention), and the state is constitutionally bound to adapt and undertake democratic norms. Nevertheless, there are other reasons to suggest that the aforementioned minimum procedures are insufficient: being obliged only to follow these minimum measures can result in a totally inappropriate direction.

To discuss more, emphasizing unfair and unjust laws on certain political groups through a democratic referendum can be mentioned as an example. Thus, only insisting upon democratic norms does not prevent anti-democratic outcomes (Pedram 2007). The following example might further clarify the meaning of this: Having a situation whereby a third of the cabinet ministers can resign for the purpose of disabling the cabinet and preventing it from functioning is a democratic right, but making obtaining the third in the cabinet a condition before the formation of the government in order to resign later, is an un-democratic act. This leads to anti-democratic outcomes but with a democratic cover.<sup>17</sup>

Usually, democracy is stretched and pressurised by procedures of public accountability and decision-making which can result in overlooking the critical outcome of social values. In this sense, the various types of democratic rule, which are based on a number of different social values, can be outlined. The Scandinavian social democracy, for example, forms one case in point, while Japanese money politics forms another. These remain, however, democracies in essence. As both of these demonstrate the relevant democratic procedural requirements, they do fall under the category of a democratic political system; regardless of any social inequalities they might sustain (Pedram 2007).

We should also recognise that minimal procedural definition of democracy might result in the reduction of the capacity for a wider variety of legal rights. In other terms, if we do not take into account results, the minimal definition might result in incomplete preservation of those basic personal freedoms, such as liberty and security. In this way, a prospective off-licence owner could be prevented from opening a business or women could be banned from swimming, driving, and mixing with the opposite sex all in the name of democracy.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, immigrants could be disadvantaged and refugees

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<sup>17</sup> Cabinet of post-Doha agreement

<sup>18</sup> For example, in some parts of Lebanon, mainly in the southern suburb of Beirut and south Lebanon, you get things like these happening. In 2011, in south Lebanon, several off-licence stores got attacked and closed. Some political parties in designated cities managed to gather some women and kids to protest against these shops and then force them to close. The explanation of such a thing was by arguing that these shops were operating in contrary to the will of the people. Since democracy is a clear expression of the will of the people, it appears to the observer, that imposing such a closure was democratic. While, if audited, it will be found that such an action meets the will of some, but deprive the other some from exercising their will and freedom. Another example, some political parties which controls the southern suburb of Beirut, put banners everywhere, which says: "My sister, your headscarf is much more important than my blood." Of course, In a democracy, Citizens, whether individuals or groups, political parties or associations, have the right to express their opinions and raise their political and religious slogans unless these slogans causes harm to the society and give rise and incite hatred

denied an education. These examples do not merely belong to the realms of theory; rather they are real-life implications of working from a minimal procedure-oriented account of the facets of a political democracy. In fact, Kant himself supports this argument in his discussion of the limits to freedom. He believed these were necessary and argued in favour of a “constitution allowing the greatest possible human freedom in accordance with laws by which the freedom of each is made to be consistent with that of all others” (Kant 1963:312).

In short, the implementation of a series of democratic procedures within a political system does not provide sufficient prerequisites for becoming a democracy or even approaching a democracy.

#### **2.2.1.4 Theoretical Aspects of Democracy**

In this study, democracy as a governing system is chosen over other types of regimes such as totalitarian and authoritarian. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen our understanding of this kind of regime as the preferred model. Here, a point has to be clarified: being preferred does not mean that it is not open to further revision, discussion, or criticism, as nothing is final and fixed, especially when it comes to theories, ideas and concepts. They are subject to continuous evolution. However, it is crucial to take certain principles of methodology into consideration when studying a concept like democracy. Therefore, the researcher believes that reviewing this concept from its theoretical aspects to its practical tools and procedures is essential.

David Beetham describes the concept of democracy as “a mode of decision-making about collectively binding rules and policies over which the people exercise control, and the most democratic arrangement where all members of the collectively enjoy effective equal rights...” (Beetham 1993:103). Jean Grugel understands that democracy can be dealt with as a theory, concept or as an ideology. He argues that it can be understood as an ideology in

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and imposes a case that prevents people from exercising their freedom. : “My sister, your headscarf is much more important than my blood” is a slogan that gets raised in an area which is completely outside the state’s authority, and since the state is the guarantor of individual’s freedom, such slogans , when imposed by political parties without the state’s control, may affect citizens’ freedom. In other words, citizens cannot, in the absence of the state’s authority that preserves their freedom, enjoy their right to accept or reject what they want, including religious and political slogans which are absorbed with coercion. To sum up, democracy in this case may result in the reduction of the capacity for a wider variety of legal rights and personal freedom.

so far as "it embodies a set of political ideas that detail the best possible form of social organisation" (Grugel 2002:12). However, there are two broad movements among supporters of democracy. On the one hand, there are the supporters who believe that democracy is the best political system. And on the other hand, there are those who believe that democracy as a concept is just a window-dressing through which legitimacy is achieved for the sake of leading and ruling the community. A model and a sample of the latter can be found across developing countries, including Lebanon.

In this study, I contend that democracy implies faith in people, a belief that people have the absolute right to make decisions for themselves, and a commitment to the idea that all people are equal in some fundamental and essential way (Grugel 2002:42). However, in a country like Lebanon, which has a multiplicity of religions and sects, it might be valid to argue that a variety of considerations, regardless of whether legal or not, imply that the essence of such notions can be engaged in opposing ways.

In order to define democracy, two main forms of practice ought to be taken into account: direct and representative. The first finds its roots in the Athenian tradition of government by the people in a small city state and is intended to safeguard the democratic rights of the community as a whole. It is therefore suggested that Marxism is a development of this form of democracy, since it is an ideology based on collective actions and decisions made by the population as a whole (Grugel 2002:14). In this way direct democracy can be defined as 'rule by the people through referenda', as the right to pass or veto laws rests with the people. In expanded societies, the model is not tenable, and so representative democracy has led to the creation of normative democratic practices. Recently, however, direct democracy has regained its position and been practiced from a broad base as a result of new technologies that allow people to express their preferences easily and securely, for example, holding regular referendums on the issue of the EU<sup>19</sup> (Pedram 2007).

Representative democracy, on the other hand, allows voters to choose their representative, privately and freely, in an election contested by many parties, who will

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<sup>19</sup> For example, holding regular referendums on the issue of the EU.

then act on their behalf, and will have enough power to carry out initiatives faced with changing circumstances. Modern liberal democracies are important examples of this system, which is centred on the liberal idea of the individual's right to be involved in politics, even though he or she is not obliged to be so. Thus, through incorporating liberal traditions into a democratic system, it can be seen as the most common form of democracy, and can be most effectively put in place by safeguarding the autonomy of the individual (Grugel 2002:14). Alongside this, an aim of this liberal type of representative democracy is also to justify, but at the same time restrain, the sovereign power of the state.

Direct democracy, however, cannot anymore be implemented in modern societies as their populations are too large and their state and civil structures are too complicated. The original aim for direct democracy can now be rather seen in some aspects of participatory democracy, particularly, for example, now that new communication technologies are available. Updated voting systems, whereby the preferences of the people can be instantly and securely recorded, are thought necessary by some for participatory democracy. Certain techno-political structures and a suitable political culture would be required in such a democratic system (Parry and Moran 1994:4). Indeed, the democratic model is still evolving, and Geraint Parry can write that "democracy is not a condition which has been achieved, but one which still must be striven for" (Parry and Moran 1994:4). Moreover, in modern societies, with their inevitable bureaucracies, organisations and compromises, political leadership remains the central requirement. A system of accountability, which therefore appears more productive and practical compared with participation alone, becomes the only way they can be democratically governed.

In liberal democracy, which we shall examine separately later, an appropriate mechanism of liability has been created with competitive elections where the vote of the electorate is contested by the different candidates for political leadership. Politics becomes a profession and Schumpeter can describe such a system as one where "democracy becomes the rule of politician rather than of the people in any direct sense" (Schumpeter 1976). Furthermore, some significant choice is made available by politicians presenting different bundles of policies. The power to govern for a time span



numbering some years is the reward for leaders successful at the election (Parry and Moran 1994:5).

Briefly, studying the empirical theory of democracy will make it easy to find out how and why liberal democracy emerged as the widespread democratic theory in the contemporary era. We will also be able to consider its strengths and weaknesses.

### **a. Democracy's Empirical Theory**

It has become clear that the importance and utilization of democracy has shifted in a major way. This happened over the last six decades or so when it clearly became a part of the vocabulary of daily political life as a way of distinguishing between 'the free world' and the Communist bloc. Over time, democracy has therefore become more and more connected with the political systems of Western Europe and the US. The result was that the concept of democracy became exclusively linked to that liberal or representative form that was common in the West. More accurately, the empirical realities faced by Western governments fell in line with the use of democracy as a particular mode of government. Jean Grugel has observed how the Cold War and thus the requirement to justify liberal democracy affected empirical democratic theorising. The negative aspect of this type of thought was its focus on the benefits of current political systems in the West as opposed to "Marxism", its perceived opponent (Pedram 2007).

More importantly, abstract conceptions of the 'good society' became less central to the empirical theory of democracy, while the implementation of democratic procedures became, for the majority of political scientists, the single criterion in defining a political system as democratic or not (Pedram 2007). Our understanding of democracy, however, has been dramatically challenged with the rise of Behaviouralism.<sup>20</sup> Arend Lijphart

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<sup>20</sup> Behaviouralism which relates to the school of politics that developed in the 50s and 60s in the USA, is a movement in political science which insists on analysing the observable behaviour of political actors. In another word, represented a revolt against institutional practices in the study of politics and called for political analysis to be modelled upon the natural

claimed that democracy was a reality of 'the real world', and in doing so clearly intended to show that the political systems of Western Europe and the US were as ideal as could be expected of a democracy (Lijphart 1984:48). In this passage Dahl perceptively outlines the difference between descriptive and normative conceptions of democracy:

*"One way to define democracy is to specify a set of goals to be maximised. Democracy can then be defined in terms of the specific governmental process necessary to maximise these goals. A second way might be called the descriptive method is to consider as a single class phenomena [of] all those nation states and social organisations that are commonly called democratic by political scientists and discover first the necessary and sufficient conditions they have in common and second, the necessary and sufficient conditions for social organizations possessing these characteristics" (Dahl 1956:63).*

Behaviouralists applied the second method, attempting to justify the normative tradition of democracy which resulted in the empirical theory of democracy. Schumpeter could only imagine democracy as a form of government and a mechanism for the election of leaders (Schumpeter 1994:34). He highlighted the important meaning of restricting popular prospects of the democratic system. Schumpeter's key approach was an assumption that the majority of the population could not be entrusted with the important task of decision-making (Schumpeter 1994:79). To make it clearer, democracy has created competing for power more institutionalised and like a regular process under institutional control. Therefore, in Schumpeter's opinion, the circumstances that will seemingly foster considerable competition between elites are the focus. Creating these circumstances requires: high calibre party political leadership; the separation of the state and the political elites; bureaucratic autonomy; a society and an opposition who accept the rules in play; and compromise and acceptance in the political culture (Pedram 2007).

Dahl, by contrast, paved the way to a different approach. He took care not blur the lines between democracy in practice and democracy as an ideal. Instead he proposed the use of the term 'polyarchy' following his findings that Western systems of government did

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sciences. That is to say that only information that could be quantified and tested empirically could be regarded as 'true' and that other normative concepts such as 'liberty' and 'justice' should be rejected as they are not falsifiable.

not tally with ideal democracy. The practicalities of polyarchy are certainly preferable to authoritarianism in which even the basics of political accountability and competition are not met. To put it simply, the institutions of polyarchy are based on a combination of elected government and civil liberties which should secure the access of different groups in society to the political system. Dahl argues that polyarchy is a political order distinguished by the presence of seven institutions (Dahl 1989:221):

- 1) Elected officials. Control over government decisions about policy is constitutionally vested in elected officials.
- 2) Free and fair elections. Elected officials are chosen in frequent and fairly conducted elections in which coercion is comparatively uncommon.
- 3) Inclusive suffrage. Practically all adults have the right to vote in the election of officials.
- 4) The right to run for office. Practically all adults have the right to run for elective offices in the government, though age limits may be higher for holding office than for the suffrage.
- 5) Freedom of expression. Citizens have the right to express themselves without the danger of severe punishment on political matters broadly defined, including criticism of officials, the government, the regime, the socioeconomic order, and the prevailing ideology.
- 6) Alternative information. Citizens have the right to seek out alternative sources of information. Moreover, alternative sources of information exist and are protected by laws.
- 7) Associational autonomy. To achieve their various rights, including those listed above, citizens also have a right to form relatively independent associations or organizations, including independent political parties and interest groups.

In fact, if we look closely at the above attributes we will find that attributes 1 to 4 tell us that a basic aspect of polyarchy is that elections are inclusive, fair, and competitive, while attributes 5 to 7 refer to political and social freedoms that are minimally essential not only during but also between elections as a condition for elections to be fair and competitive (O'Donnell 1996).

Accordingly, an overall view of the above list written by Dahl and debated by the political scientist O'Donnell points out that most current democracies can be characterised as polyarchy, instead of real democracy.

Of course, understanding how power functions in any society can make clear why policy-making is not democratic despite having regular free and fair general elections. In other words, it is not democracy or democratic elements that always form polities in societies, but sometimes, unelected wealthy bourgeois can play an important role in society thus ignoring the government polity (Pedram 2007). Aristotle supported this assertion when he wrote about the rivals for political authority. He argued that one of the most obvious rivals for political authority is the rich as they use their authority to keep rich, while their political slogan, by which they propose to secure their own exclusive authority, is that those who contribute to the city ought to be given a proportionate say in determining how resources are to be used (Winthrop 1978).

Furthermore, only electoralist or procedural understanding of democracy are promoted by empirical democratic theory. In other terms, through its focus on the visible actions of politicians it overlooks the role of hidden power structures, such as the cultural practices and dimensions that influence politics on the ground. The model it provides, therefore, is inadequate for the study of the political systems of developing countries. It also omits the political realities behind the official and visible structures of government. Another difficulty is that empirical theory has a prescriptive approach to developing countries, which are assumed to arrive at democracy by following the route of Western governments. It is false, however, to hope that all societies should follow this particular path. Furthermore, empirical democratic theory does not deal properly with the issue of how economic resources, or their absence, influence the running of a political system (Pedram 2007). Indeed, empirical democracy (including liberal democracy), puts forward few proposals about socio-economic issues or different types of structural inequality, either globally or inside a state, for the simple reason that it considers them of little importance for the exercise of citizenship and thus in preserving the democratic system. Additionally, from the experiences of developing countries and the Third World, it seems that extreme income inequalities and equal citizenship cannot exist side by side (Grugel 2002:22).

## **b. Liberal Democracy**

Liberal democracy can be defined as a particular type of democracy with its philosophy being essentially based on a set of theories about individuals, states and societies. Schumpeter states that democracy "is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which the individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote" (Schumpeter 1950:269). Likewise, the American political sociologist, Barrington Moore (Barrington Moore 1966:414) and Samuel Huntington (Huntington 1984:195) focus on the democratic rule dimension. In other definitions, the traits attributed to liberal democracy fall under both dimensions.

A considerable amount of literature has been published on Liberal Democracy. To begin with, Liberalism can be portrayed as follows: It is a group of ideas or principles, given substance in democratic political institutions, that have developed, modified, adapted and changed over time. These values are mainly centred on freedom and equality. Despite this recognizable core of values, Liberal Democracy, as a product of culture, has been a challenged territory, both in the real world of electoral politics and in the academy (Katerberg 1995). Moreover, George Bragues argued that Liberal democracy was founded on the enlightenment notion that there are principles, accessible to unassisted reasons, demonstrating that political life should be dedicated to the protection of rights common to all human beings (Bragues 2006:158). Rorty thinks that liberal democracy is prior to philosophy in the sense that it simply does not need any philosophical justification (Bernstein 1987).

In his book *Democracy and Democratization*, George Sorensen argued that "Liberalism developed in opposition to the medieval, hierarchical institutions, the despotic monarchies whose claim to all-powerful rule rested on the assertion that they enjoyed divine support." Sorensen demonstrated that Liberal Democracy was called Liberal at first, and it mainly aimed at restricting state power over sovereign people and civil society, then, in a secondary motion, it became democratic, mainly aiming to create

structures that would later secure a popular mandate for holders of state power (Bernstein 1987).

In his *Models of Democracy*, David Held wrote that John Stewart Mill's liberal democratic state operates on behalf of all citizens and protects its claim to legitimacy with the pledge to sustain security and safety of persons and property while, at the same time, promoting equal justice and fairness among individuals (Held 1996). Mill himself is well-known for his theories and involvement in classifying the ethos of liberal democracy. In his famous work *On Liberty and Consideration on Representative Government*, he points out what is regularly seen as the first systematic clarification and defence of liberal democracy. He says:

*“In the past, as many observed, tyranny was something experienced by the majority of a nation's people at the hands of a minority so there was no danger of the majority tyrannizing over itself. But with the emergence of large democratic nations (like the US) a need was created for people to limit their power over themselves”* (Mill 1991:7).

Thus, the goal of *On Liberty* was to spot and identify the principles in accord with which the people should secure this limitation. In short, Mill claims: “the only purpose, for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good is not a sufficient warrant” (Mill 1991:14); In other words, "it is a command against government paternalism as well as against overt tyranny. In fact, it favours what is often now called the pluralist mandate that citizens ought as far as possible to be able to pursue what they see as their own goods and in their own ways” (Mill 1991:17). Chiefly, Mill outlines the most significant freedoms to preserve: freedom of conscience, thought and feeling; holding and expressing opinions; following personal life plans; and meeting with others for any non-mischievous purpose (Pedram 2007).

As these freedoms usually only direct affect those who enjoy them, the state, including democratic states, and others should refrain from any interference in them, whether paternalistically or not (Mill 1991:16-17). Mill, although he outlines little detail on how citizens' freedom should be preserved, clearly considers some aspects of a citizen's life

should be free of regulation, and also some legal restrictions on areas where even a democratically mandated government should be able to legislate. He therefore lays emphasis on the "preservation of a distinction between private and public life and the rule of law" (Mill 1991:16-17). Furthermore, Mill prescribes the direct participation of citizens in matters of government, in order that "people in this way are able to develop intellectual talents, communal and moral values." Mill considers that, as direct participation is unworkable in large societies, the ideal type of government must be representative (Mill 1991:256).

In summary, there are political freedoms to the extent that a country's citizens have the freedom to form or take part in political groups and the freedom to express political opinions in a variety of media. For this reason, the foremost interpretation of democratic theories during the second half of twentieth century and also the twenty-first century was liberal democracy. It was drawn on by nearly all the well-known workable democracies, which incorporated its strengths in their structure and mandate and tried to profit from it to the greatest extent possible (Pedram 2007).

### **c. Alternatives to Liberal Democracy**

"Democracy" is a vague term with several meanings, and Liberal Democracy is not the only form of democracy or even the only valid type of government. Inasmuch as Liberal Democracy is a system which has its advantages and disadvantages, it is in our interest not only to critique it, but also, if possible, to look for alternatives to it.

#### **I. Participatory Democracy**

During the course of my research, I found that everybody suggests a founder or a father of the participatory democratic theory. Without entering this debate, I will try to reconcile all of these viewpoints in a way which benefits this research.

The argument, assuming there is one and only one classical theory of democracy which is liberal democracy, seems far from reliable as many scholars have managed to suggest an alternative or an equivalent theory, the participatory theory of democracy. Today, most political scientists advocate participation in politics because it is democratic, and a degree of participation is useful to make government secure: To keep even an inefficient and imprudent government functioning it may be necessary to permit at least minimal participation. Most agree that participation is justified in part because it satisfies individuals who, by participating, can force the ruling "elite" to meet their substantive demands (Winthrop 1978).

As Aristotle explained, those who support democracy and political equity do so because they believe that liberty is the fitting choice for humans. The democratic principle of equal participation is defended not to ensure efficient or stable rule, nor because it is satisfying in itself, but rather it is grounded in the opinion that equal political participation is necessary in order to fulfil the human condition (Winthrop 1978).

Jürgen Habermas, the German sociologist and philosopher in the tradition of critical theory and pragmatism, is a participatory democrat who developed a theoretical account of why we might expect the individual capacities necessary to democracy to be produced by democratic settings. His explanation, according to Delba Winthrop, does not equate democracy with any particular set of institutional mechanisms, such as voting, separation of powers, or representation. Rather, he understands democracy as any institutional order whose legitimacy depends on collective will-formation through discourse (Winthrop 1978). Democracy, according to Habermas, "is a question of finding arrangements which can ground the basic presupposition that the basic institutions of the society and the basic political decisions would meet with the unforced agreement of all those involved, if they could participate, as free and equal, in discursive will-formation"(Winthrop 1978:).

The Professor of Sociology Gordon Marshall, who believes that participatory democracy is a "reincarnation of the ancient Greek ideal of government by the people" (Marshall 1998:482), argues that the strength of participatory democracy is that it binds individuals to the group through their active involvement in all decisions (Marshall



1998:482). Professor David Held argues that ‘participatory democracy’ is among other things a “direct participation’ of citizens in the regulation of the key institutions of society – including the workplace and the local community” (Held 1996:271).

A belief in the importance of liberty and activism and an understanding that changes in government and people having the right to vote do not necessarily equate to democracy are what participatory theory is founded upon. Indeed, the theory works on the basis that democracy is achieved through trust and mutual relationships. Crawford Brough Macpherson, the Canadian political scientist, set forth the idea of participatory democracy. This model stood apart from what was known as Schumpeter’s model, which had a negative outlook on human kind (Macpherson 1977:43).

An extremely unclear vision of the state characterizes participatory theory, although it does still recognise its role. It is a theory that took shape following the Second World War, which saw the state play a fundamental and comprehensive role. However, it encounters problems when one attempts to apply it to a vast community such as the nation state. The merits of participatory democracy, then, speak for themselves at a small-scale level (city councils, regional governments, etc.), but whether it can cope with issues on a national scale is uncertain (Pedram 2007). Macpherson appears to make a statement supporting this:

*“Not how to run it but how to reach it... What roadblocks have to be removed i.e. what changes in our present society and the now prevailing ideology are prerequisite or co-requisite conditions for reaching participatory democracy? ... One is a change in people's consciousness (or unconsciousness) from seeing themselves and acting as exercisers and enjoyers of the exertion and development of their own capacities. This is requisite not only to the emergence but also to the operation of a participatory democracy. The operation of a participatory democracy would require a stronger sense of community than now prevails. The other prerequisite is a great reduction of the present social and economic inequality, since that inequality ... requires a non-participatory political system to hold the society together”* (Macpherson 1977:93).

The ideals of participatory democracy would have citizens amending and protecting their constitution, creating policies and setting their priorities and laws. In reality politicians are necessary to implement policy, but the final and unquestionable power to shape it rests with the people. There is a direct correlation between how far the people influence the constitution, table or veto legislation, and set budget or social priorities and the amount of involvement they opt for. This rather than the politicians whom the people have elected permitting them these influences. Certain people might state that participatory democracy is in fact "direct democracy" or "deliberative democracy", but in a more complete form (Pedram 2007).

## **II. Deliberative Democracy**

According to its dictionary definition, deliberation is the act of deliberating, or the act of weighing and examining the reasons for and against a choice or measure. In other words, it is the careful discussion and examination of the reasons for and against a measure. Austen-Smith defined deliberation as a “conversation whereby individuals speak and listen sequentially” before making a collective decision (Gambetta 1998), while Adam Przeworski defined it as a form of discussion which intended or intends to change the preferences on the bases of which people decide how to act( Przeworski 1998).

Interestingly, Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson argue that Deliberative democracy asserts the necessity to justify decisions made by citizens and their representatives. They debate that Deliberative democracy makes room for many other forms of decision-making (Gutmann and Thompson 2004). Diego Gambetta mentions two points of view in one of his essays. He argues, on the one hand, that deliberation does not invariably bring positive effects to light, but, in certain circumstances it does more damage than good (Gambetta 1998). He gives an example of this, saying that if the quality of outcomes declines rapidly with time, deliberation may simply waste precious time. On the other hand, Gambetta mentions the viewpoints of several scholars who argue that “deliberation does more to benefit than to harm to quality of decisions or legitimacy or both” (Gambetta 1998). He discusses this, saying that effective deliberation can affect the quality of decisions in four ways: Firstly, it can render the outcomes of decisions

pareto-superior<sup>21</sup> by fostering better solutions; secondly, it can make the outcomes fairer in terms of distributive justice by providing better protection for weaker parties; thirdly, it can lead to a larger consensus on any one decision; and fourthly, it can generate more legitimate decisions that target both minorities and majorities (Gambetta 1998). Susan C. Stokes argues that deliberation improves the quality of decisions and enriches democracy (Stokes 1998).

Jon Elster demonstrated that deliberation among democratically elected delegates may be part of the process of adopting the constitution, while promoting deliberative democracy may be one of the goals of the framers (Elster 1998). Elster argues that the methods by which constitutions are implemented differ broadly. He points out that not all constitutions engage deliberation, nor are all adopted by democratic procedures. Elster adds what he calls a look at the history of constitution making and concludes that it suggests that the procedure may perhaps be nondemocratic and non-deliberative (the Prussian constitution of December 5, 1848 which was imposed by the king, and the Japanese constitution of 1946 which was imposed by the U.S. occupying army); democratic and non-deliberative (the French constitutions of 1799, 1802, and 1804, written by and for Napoleon I, and the constitution of 1852, written by and for his nephew Louis Napoleon); democratic and deliberative (the Frankfurt assembly of 1848, the Lebanese constitution of 1943); or non-democratic and deliberative (various pre-revolutionary French assemblies) (Elster 1998) .

In 1989, Joshua Cohen wrote that deliberation aims to appear as a rationally motivated consensus to find reasons that are influential and convincing to all who are committed to acting on the results of a free and reasoned assessment of alternatives by equals (Cohen 1989). In another paper Cohen, argued that the main idea and concept of a deliberative democracy is entrenched in the spontaneous ideal of a democratic organization or association in which the justification of the terms and conditions of the organization or association proceeds through public argument and reasoning among equal citizens. Cohen pointed out that the formal conception of a deliberative democracy has five main features (Cohen 1989):

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<sup>21</sup> Pareto-superiority: a move from one distribution point to another is said to be superior one at least one party is better off and no one else is worse off. This includes moves that benefit all parties; the essential concern is that no one is worse off after the move compared to welfare before the move.

1- A deliberative democracy is an on-going and independent association, whose members expect it to continue into the indefinite future.

2- The members of the association share (and it is common knowledge that they share) the view that the appropriate terms of association provide a framework for or are the results of their deliberation. They share, that is, a commitment to co-ordinating their activities within institutions that make deliberation possible and according to norms that they arrive at through their deliberation. For them, free deliberation among equals is the basis of legitimacy.

3- A deliberative democracy is a pluralistic association. The members have diverse preferences, convictions and ideals concerning the conduct of their own lives. While sharing a commitment to the deliberative resolution of problems of collective choice (D2), they also have divergent aims, and do not think that one particular set of preferences, convictions or ideals is mandatory.

4- Because the members of a democratic association regard deliberative procedures as the source of legitimacy, it is important to them that the terms of their association not merely be the results of their deliberation, but also be manifest to them as such. They prefer institutions in which the connections between deliberation and outcomes are evident to ones in which the connections are less clear.

5- The members recognize one another as having deliberative capacities i.e. the capacities required for entering into a public exchange of reasons and for acting on the result of such public reasoning.

Cohen summarized by saying that the theory of deliberative democracy aims to give substance to this formal ideal by characterizing the conditions that should be obtained if the social order is to be manifestly regulated by deliberative forms of collective choice.

Debating Ideal Deliberation, Cohen found that it is free in that it satisfies two conditions. The first is that the participants look upon themselves as bound only by the results of their deliberation and by the preconditions for that deliberation. Their consideration of proposals is not constrained by the authority of prior norms or requirements. The second condition is that the participants suppose that they can act from the results, taking the fact that a certain decision is arrived at through their deliberation as a sufficient reason

for complying with it (Cohen 1989). Cohen continues to argue that Ideal Deliberation is reasoned in that the parties to it are required to state their reasons for advancing proposals, supporting them or criticizing them. They give reasons with the expectation that those reasons (and not, for example, their power) will settle the fate of their proposal. In Ideal Deliberation, as Habermas puts it, “no force except that of the better argument is exercised” (cited in Cohen 1989). Cohen thinks that in Ideal Deliberation parties are both formally and substantively equal. They are formally equal in that the rules regulating the procedure do not single out individuals. Everyone with the deliberative capacities has equal standing at each stage of the deliberative process. Each can put issues on the agenda, propose solutions, and offer reasons in support or in criticism of proposals, and each has an equal voice in the decision (Cohen 1989).

Given that Lebanon is a country with a multicultural-society and competing political parties, some of which seemingly have foreign agendas, deliberation plays an important role in daily political life. Deliberation is involved everywhere: in the cabinet, the parliament, and in all other political institutions. But in the case of Lebanon, reaching an Ideal Deliberation and, through this, a proper deliberative democracy, as Cohen argues, looks like an impossible and a complex issue. Perhaps, the only two agreements to involve successful but not ideal deliberation in Lebanon were the National pact of 1943 and the Taif agreement of 1989, when deliberation arrived at a rational consensus. Since then, and particularly after the 90s, deliberation started to affect negatively the functioning of the state and its institutions.

### **III- Consociational Democracy**

Consociational democracy, as Arend Lijphart defines it, means “government by elite cartel designed to turn a democracy with a fragmented political culture into a stable democracy” (Lijphart 1969:216). According to Lijphart, efforts made on consociationalism are not essentially successful. However, successful consociational democracy, as Lijphart argues, requires (Lijphart 1969:216):

(I) that the elites have the ability to accommodate the divergent interests and demands of the subcultures.

(2) This requires that they have the ability to transcend cleavages and to join in a common effort with the elites of rival subcultures.

(3) This in turn depends on their commitment to the maintenance of the system and to the improvement of its cohesion and stability.

(4) Finally, all of the above requirements are based on the assumption that the elites understand the perils of political fragmentation.

The above four requirements, as Lijphart demonstrate, are logically implied by the concept of consociational democracy as defined by himself. Back then, as Lijphart argues, a study of the efficacious consociational democracies in the Low Countries, Switzerland, Austria, and Lebanon proposes a number of “conditions favourable to the establishment and the persistence of this type of democracy. These have to do with inter-subcultural relations at the elite level, inter-subcultural relations at the mass level, and elite-mass relations within each of the subcultures” (Lijphart 1969:216).

To sum it up, Lijphart finds that several connections have a positive impact on the establishment and successfulness of consociational democracy. These are: the relationship between elites themselves, the relationship between masses, and the relationship between elites and masses within one subculture. However, all of the aforesaid relationships began to change in the 1960s.

Speedy modernization was one of the main reasons. It is argued that speedy modernization caused harm to the relationship between elite and masses. For example, people belonging to specific sects started to look at the popular members in their sects as members that grant them a piece of the modernization cake. This happened in many developing divided societies (Nordlinger 1972:114). Indeed, Lebanon was admitting no exception (Barclay 2007).

One of the disadvantages of the consociational system is that its efficiency, effectiveness and workability relies heavily on cooperation amongst different sects. When cooperation fails, consociational democracy fails. Lijphart who believes that “the Second World War marked the beginning of consociational democracy in Lebanon” (Lijphart 1969:217), argues that “decision making that entails accommodation among all subcultures is a difficult process, and consociational democracies are always

threatened by a degree of immobilism” (Lijphart 1969:218). Quoted in Lijphart’s paper, Michael C. Hudson argues that the Lebanese political system is "attuned to incessant adjustment among primordial groups rather than policy planning and execution." As a result, its "apparent stability ... is deceptively precarious: social mobilization appears to be overloading the circuits of the Lebanese political system” (Lijphart 1969:219).

However, the “apparent stability” that Hudson wrote about didn’t last for long. The 1975 civil war proved that the Lebanese political system was nothing but a fragile system and that consociational democracy did not help much in preventing conflicts amidst Lebanese political parties. After the Lebanese Civil war –which was reflected on the political stability in the country through entrenching sectarian divisions and causing sectarian segregation- a debate took place as regards to the Lebanese political system and whether it is considered a consociational system and, accordingly, applies consociational democracy. To all outward appearances, the Lebanese political system looked so, but if thoroughly examined, it will appear that it was not more than a false label or a window dressing that was not practically implemented. From the Taif agreement hitherto, Lebanon has suffered from a plethora of foreign interventions in various fields. Moreover, whenever Lebanese politicians disagreed on how to run the country, a foreign mediation was summoned in hope for resolving the outstanding disagreement. The following examples illustrate some of the impediments preventing the application of consociational democracy:

- 1- The continuous intervention of the Syrian regime which gives arise to the question The question how can a system claims to be applying consociationalism while that system is being partially operated by a dictatorship (the Syrian regime)?
- 2- In the crucial decisions, such as war, for example, Hezbollah was waging war on Israel without taking the permission of the State or the Lebanese citizens.
- 3- In 2008, when Hezbollah found that the Government will not be subject to its conditions, it managed to force the government to abdicate its sovereign decisions, by the use of arms.

The aforementioned problems and many more proves that consociational solutions for problems that Lebanon suffered after that Taif agreement was not applied. In other

words, consociational solutions were abandoned; however, what took place instead was either the use of arms or the foreign intervention. In both cases, the foundations of consensual democracy were demolished and accordingly, I believe that consensual democracy cannot be applicable on Lebanon.

### **2.2.1.5 Democratization**

In *The Third Wave*, Samuel Huntington argued that “causes of democratization could differ substantially from one place to another” (Huntington 1991:83) and causes responsible for the initial regime changes in the wave (Huntington 1991:380). In spite of this, however, Huntington stressed that, in general, “elections, open, free and fair are the essence of democracy, the inescapable sine qua non” (Huntington 1991:9). And he emphasised that political reform should be gradual and incremental and should be “undertaken by moderate, realistic men and women in the spirit of soul-at-a-time” (Huntington 1991:9).

Most writers on democracy and democratization would not refute the stages and the conclusion that Huntington reached in the third wave. Very few would disagree with the idea that what might work in one country might not work in the other, as the political environment is highly complex and involves many quantifiable and non-quantifiable variables. Prezeworski has noted that democratization is “a process of institutionalising uncertainty” (Marks and Diamond 1992). It might, therefore, be more practical to define democratization in general terms, as David Potter did. Potter kept the definition of democratization very broad when wrote: “the word democratization refers to political changes moving in a democratic direction” (Potter et al 1997:3). Rex Brynen, Baghat Korany and Paul Noble, defined democratization as follows: “Political democratization initials the expansion of political participation in such a way as to provide citizens with a degree of real and meaningful collective control over public policy” (Brynen et al 1995:3).

#### **2.2.1.5.1 Democratization and the State**

When discussing democratization it might be helpful to demonstrate its purpose. The purpose of democratization is the building of a democratic state. But the question is:



How does this happen? The general consensus is that democracy entails more than simply holding elections. However, academics have so far been unable to agree on what exactly is necessary. We are aware that the state is, in the final analysis, a means of dominating society. In a democracy, then, hierarchies which act combining legitimate power, persuasion and bureaucracy tend to hold power. A further characteristic of a democracy is the existence of several bodies that hold authority and make decisions. In an undemocratic state, meanwhile, democratization makes the state apparatus its main target. Therefore, it is rather illogical to believe that an undemocratic state will itself try to carry out democratization.

Overall, a democratic government's legitimacy is reliant on its ability to convincingly demonstrate it is truly representative of the people, acts in their interest, and can be held accountable by them. Therefore, a democratic government should adhere to these principles. Although democratic and capitalist states naturally work to a business- and profit-oriented agenda, it is more likely that they will answer demands for social and economic justice given that they rely on a healthy balance between this and economic prosperity in order to survive. With regard to force, it is widely agreed that the state can coerce and use violence. However, it is argued that in a democracy there is no need to resort to this unless it is to protect against outside threats or against criminals or those causing social disorder (Pedram 2007).

Grugel has assessed some fundamental characteristics of a democratic state:

- I. Territorial integrity, either as a result of the belief that the state represents a nation or through negotiations and legitimate and binding agreements that make a multinational state possible.
- II. The rule of law, that is, minimal rights and duties of citizens are legally encoded and the parameters of state activity legally defined.
- III. A minimal use of legally sanctioned violence against its own citizens.

IV. A popularly elected and representative government that is formally controlled by constitutional channels of accountability.

V. A complex bureaucracy that can make claims to impartiality.

VI. The existence of multiple centres of power.

VII. The formal existence of channels of access to decision making, even for subordinated social groups, which are operational to some degree.

VIII. Some commitment to social and economic justice (Grugel 2002:37-40).

In short and to end this section, the only way that leads to fully democratizing any state involves applying, to a degree, the following three conditions:

- 1- Institutional change.
- 2- Representative change.
- 3- Functional transformation.

These three steps create the path towards full democratization, regardless the fact of that in contemporary democratizations, most attention focuses on having and implementing institutional change.

#### **2.2.1.5.2 The Epistemology of Democratization**

The course of modern democratization is actually far more difficult than Huntington suggests in his theory, the Third Wave of Democratization. In fact, this theory fails to elucidate very different explanations for democratization. First of all, it is required to make a separation as to the causes of democratization. Secondly, the wave approach takes for granted that there is now a global movement to establish democracy. This argument might be true to an extent, considering what is happening in certain countries all over the world, and especially in the Arab world. But, according to a more precise

consideration, the number of stable and liberal democracies is actually growing very slowly (Diamond 1999:24). Huntington presumed that more democracies were emerging because more elections were being held. However, holding elections, as mentioned in previous sections, does not necessarily indicate the implementation of democracy and democratization. In other words, if elections were taken as the only, or the main sign of democracy and democratization, then a country like Lebanon would be considered one of the most democratic countries in the world, and certainly in the region.

Social conflict theory has also been pointed to in conventional studies as sparking the democratization process (Marx 1972). This theory, based on a critique of capitalism, is regarded as another classic method of analysing political reform. It states that class structures were overturned by capitalism, which led to the formation of a middle class and thus an insistence from a new section of society for greater social and economic reform. Indeed, Seymour Lipset asserts that capitalism bred bourgeois and middle class professionals, who are essential for political reform and hence democracy (Lipset 1959:27).

Some researchers believe that democratization has its roots in the 1776 American Revolution. Dahl, for example, dates the process to the success known by the question of representation which brought about the Revolution and ultimately saw the birth of the United States. Other scholars, such as Huntington, equate democracy with individualism and consequently hold the view that its first wave began in the 1600s. The rapid spread of capitalism in the West and the fierce social conflicts that ensued should equally be considered (Pedram 2007).

The non-elite or lower classes were increasingly empowered by growth in the economy, creating a situation where they came to recognize those rights that had so far been denied them. The process of democratization, therefore, resulted from social conflicts. Meanwhile, capitalism and its ensuing social conflicts resulted in the development of a modern and fairly independent state able to play a pivotal role in further social reform. In Europe, this new state enabled the advancement of socio-economic reforms which helped pave the way towards democratization (Grugel 2002:37). In other words, socio-

economic pressure played a key role in leading to democratization, taking into consideration the combination of this pressure with the development of a liberal state that was to some degree autonomous (Pedram 2007).

We can see various different types of self-declared democracies in modern experiments with democratization. Certain countries have seen the emergence of a liberal democracy, while others have seen a degree of electoral change. But the overall picture is completed by the problems democracy faces in most Third World countries. It is thus imperative that we make a distinction between democracies with problems or part-democracies, and those that are secure and strong. In short, contemporary processes of democratization encompass failures and successes. The question raised here is: why do some democratization experiments succeed where others fail? The following is Grugel's short answer to this question:

*“Democracies are political systems comprising institutions that translate citizen's preferences into policy, have effective states that act to protect and deepen democratic rights, and count on a strong participatory and critical civil society. A consolidated democracy is one in which this political order is routinized and accepted. Consolidation, then, implies both the deepening and stabilizing of democracy. In addition, the chances for consolidation are greatest in cases where favourable international circumstances are allied with state capacity and a growing, vocal and effective civil society”* (Grugel 2002:36).

Initially, the process of democratization started most powerfully in countries which were economically strong and well developed. In other words, stable democracy seemed to be a luxury only rich nations could afford. But this form of democracy or this concept was not to succeed all the time as it was challenged in some developed, capitalist economies such as the former German Democratic Republic in the 1930s, in which the state claimed to distribute wealth relatively equitably and was officially dedicated to social justice, but could hardly be considered a functioning democracy (Case 1993). Also, in some authoritarian regimes democracy was replaced by fragile or semi-democracies. This implies that although capitalism seems essential, it still does not ensure the emergence of genuine democracy (e.g. the semi-democracy in Malaysia).

Meanwhile, democratic types of government have continued to exist in some countries for considerable periods, even though economic development was slow and elitism was still in force. This happened, for example, in the island nations of the English-speaking Caribbean, Venezuela and India. (Pedram 2007)

In summary, we should see the wave theory as a useful way of placing democratization in its global setting. However, it must be noted that it is not capable of including all of the various factors implicit in the process. It stresses the need to note that democracy has more chance of developing following social conflict at certain times in world history. But, as we have seen above, on a wider scale the application of wave theory can be rather limited. Furthermore, it falls short of clarifying how democracy develops on a national level. With this in mind, we must examine theories of social and economic change and political action in order to gain an understanding of the matter. (Pedram 2007)

#### **2.2.1.5.3 The Process of Democratization**

It is not a matter of surprise if we find that the number of successful and thriving democracies is overshadowed by either failed or stalled democratic experiments. It certainly seems that, in some countries around the world, problems like socio-economic imbalance and gender inequality mean that democratization will keep on being slow process and will remain a painful, and sometimes impossible, task.

Since the Portuguese dictatorship was overthrown in 1974, the number of democratically ruled countries has dramatically increased. Prior to this, there were an estimated forty democracies world-wide; these were joined steadily during the late 1970s and early 1980s as a number of states made the transition from authoritarianism to seemingly democratic government. The late 1980s and the decline, and ultimate collapse, of the Soviet Union saw a significant boost to the pace of world-wide democratization (Pedram 2007). Consequently by the end of 1995 there were, as Larry Diamond has noted, between 76 and 117 democracies, depending on the method used to measure them (Diamond 1999:154). This post-1974 period is what Samuel Huntington has termed the third wave of global democratic expansion; he demonstrated how

important the effects of regional and international democratization were (Huntington 1991).

Undoubtedly, holding elections or toppling an authoritarian regime and replacing it with another, even if this receives the support of the people, does not permit a country to wear the badge of democracy. Huntington describes supplanting military regimes as the extremely important beginning to third wave democratization. However, he unwillingly skims over the underlying principal behind taking such action. He states that countries came to begin the process of democratization because of a huge growth in democratic discourse. But it was in fact a result of social and economic change at both the national and supra-national levels. Quite simply the old political system became unable to function in the context of accelerated change to socio-economic structures and had to be exposed and taken apart (Pedram 2007).

It is possible to view democracy today as the culmination of a steady but important development in political thinking. Since the 1800s it has gradually taken root and grown across throughout the world, demonstrating its ability to spread modern values and beliefs. This development, however, was not straight forward and has faced challenges, but the reasons behind and the incentives involved in democracy have been different in space and time. In the nineteenth century, for example, change was spurred on by social class, whereas in the last two decades of the twentieth century it was carried forward by a complicated mixture of social conflict, state building, free global trade and external influences. There has been considerable effort made to provide an explanation for the expansion of democracy; the most convincing of these has been Huntington's aforementioned wave theory. With its wide ranging ability to include different issues, it argues that the causes of democratization in those countries to which the wave is common are comparable. Huntington's theory also makes note that reverse waves of authoritarianism have followed those of democratization. This viewpoint is backed up by his mention of those societies that have either been unable to secure lasting democracy or have seen its collapse (Pedram 2007).

Huntington explains a wave of democratization as follows:

*“A wave of democratisation is a group of transitions from nondemocratic to democratic regimes that occur within a specified period of time and that significantly outnumber transitions in the opposite direction during that period of time. A wave also involves liberalisation or partial democratisation in political systems that do not become fully democratic. Each of the first two waves of democratisation was followed by a reverse wave in which some but not all of countries that had previously made the transition to democracy reverted to non-democratic rule” (Huntington 1991:11).*

In his book, Huntington finally comes to the third wave of democratization which, he argues, started in Portugal in 1974, then spread to Greece and Spain, and after that, in the 1980s, reached some Latin American countries. This wave, according to Huntington, ended up in Eastern and Central Europe and the Soviet Union. One can argue that the profound need for economic growth and popular awareness about political developments contributed greatly to the smooth and painless integration of these countries into the democratic union.

To sum up, adding to what Huntington demonstrated in his book, one can extend these three waves some other encouraging developments that have occurred in certain other developing countries which have showed a great desire for democratization. However, one should bear in mind that in many of these countries these objectives have been counterbalanced and outweighed by conditions that have rendered electoral democracy increasingly shallow, illiberal, unaccountable, and afflicted (O'Donnell et al. 1986:81). In other words, establishing some democratic institutions which are believed to be taken or filled by elected members from the public cannot, in itself, be seen as a proof of successful democratization (Pedram 2007).





### **3. Chapter Three: The Foundation of Lebanon and the Structure of the Lebanese Political Regime.**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The chapter looks specifically at the development of Lebanon as a nation-state since 1943 when it gained its independence from the French mandate, and examines how the Lebanese political system operated before and after the civil war, and whether the functioning of its institutions helped to strengthen the democratic functioning of the State or failed to do so. In others words, the chapter will look at the institutional framework of the Lebanese political system and how the translation of the confessional structure of rule impacted on the stability of this claimed “model of democracy”. But before examining these details, the first section of this chapter will briefly outline the French mandate of Lebanon, the 1926 constitution and some of its articles that respected, recognized and documented democratic principles of governance, and finally the gradual transition from the Mandate Era to the independent state.

#### **3.2 The French Mandate of Lebanon**

For almost four centuries, the population lived in provinces under Ottoman rule which were organized in a millet system, bounding people to their societies and communities by their religious relationships or confessional backgrounds. In late 1912, the Ottoman Governor of Beirut, Adham Beck, sent a report on the political situation in the city to the Grand Vizier Kamil Pasha, saying:

*“There are many interactions occurring in the country due to various factors, and a large section of the population has looked to England or France to repair the unfortunate situation that they are facing. If you do not make a real reform the country will inevitably get out of our control”* (Hallak 1985:13).

Thus, the Ottomans started to lose control of the situation, culminating in end of their system of rule after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire directly following First World War, when the League of Nations mandated the five provinces that make up present-day Lebanon to the direct control of France. Consequently, when the Ottoman Empire was

formally split up by the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920, it was agreed that four of its territories in the Middle East should be League of Nations mandates temporarily governed by the United Kingdom and France on their behalf. The British were given Palestine and Iraq, while the French were given a mandate over Syria and Lebanon which was a part of Syria.

On September 1, 1920, General Gouraud declared the establishment of Greater Lebanon with its present boundaries and with Beirut as its capital (Takiyieddine 1997). However, this state, which was announced on the stairway of the *Palais des Pine* in Beirut with the participation of Christian and Muslim spiritual leaders, incorporated a large number of contradictions. Although the historical picture had included figures from all sects and parties, they were still not all satisfied with this settlement. These contradictions were exacerbated by the fact that the majority of Muslims and Orthodox Christians wanted to join the Arab state announced by Prince Faisal, while the Maronite Christians were supporters of the French announcement of the new Lebanese State. In spite of this division, the State of Greater Lebanon was established and wholly governed under direct French rule from 1920 until 1926. The situation continued when it was transformed into the Republic of Lebanon after the declaration of the constitution in May 1926.

The Lebanese Constitution of 1926, which in its preamble officially declared Lebanon as a “parliamentary democratic republic based on respect for public liberties, especially the freedom of opinion and belief, and respect for social justice and equality of rights and duties among all citizens without discrimination”<sup>22</sup>, also recognized 17 religious families, Christian, Muslim and Jewish, and granted them all as Lebanese Citizens equality before the law. This was outlined in Article 7: “All Lebanese are equal before the law. They equally enjoy civil and political rights and equally are bound by public obligations and duties without any distinction.”<sup>23</sup> It also declared in Article 9 that the State guarantees the communities, no matter of what religion, respect for their personal status, laws and religious interests.<sup>24</sup> Article 10 grants them the right to decide on

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<sup>22</sup> The Preamble of 1926 Lebanese constitution, section C.

<sup>23</sup> The 1926 Lebanese constitution, Article 7, [Equality].

<sup>24</sup> The 1926 Lebanese constitution, Article 9, [Conscience, Belief].

education<sup>25</sup>, while Article 13 gives them the freedom of expression, freedom of press, freedom of assembly and freedom of association.<sup>26</sup>

Clearly, after examining the articles above, in addition to many other articles that made up the 1926 constitution, it is clear that Lebanon was given political structures dictated by a coherent constitutional philosophy. Indeed, although the 1926 Lebanese Constitution was made under the French mandate, it is clear that the country's different groups saw the need to implement the Constitution which laid out the rules of parliamentary democracy, human rights and public freedoms. Additionally, it may be said that some of the constitution's articles and the institutions that were put in place met to an extent what Robert Dahl mentioned when he outlined the political institutions of modern representative democracy.

Later, the Lebanese found both Opponents and Approvers opposing each other in one state with the French running its affairs. However, the announcement of the constitution and the establishment of the Republic in 1926, and the election of the president and the formation of a government that included all the major communities, also had an impact in shaping new political trends in other ways, including: the Christian political movement which demanded more independence and national sovereignty and criticized the Mandate because its authority exceeded its role, and asked for cooperation with Muslims in defending the interests of Lebanon and promoting involvement in the national movements of the Arab world. It also allowed the Islamic movement to start realistically taking the Lebanese entity into consideration (Al-Jeser).

At that time Lebanon was still under French mandate. With the beginning of the Second World War in Europe in 1939 and the German occupation of France, Lebanon and Syria continued to be under the mandate of the collaborating Vichy regime. Two years later, the Vichy French regime in both countries was removed by British and Free French forces moving northwards from Palestine, and the latter now proclaimed the

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, Article 10

<sup>26</sup> Ibid , Article 13

independence of Syria and Lebanon. It was soon understood that independence would only be enforced at the desire of the British, and there was much uncertainty as to what course events would take in Lebanon after it had achieved independence (Salibi 1988).

By 1943 it had been realised by many that the influence of France in world affairs was declining, and both the British and Americans were keen to remove both Lebanon and Syria from French control (Salibi 1988).

### **3.3 The Emergence of the Post 1943 State**

As the circumstances of the First World War led to the formation of the “Greater Lebanon”, it was during the Second World War that the country achieved its independence, once again determined largely by outside events. The path to independence made genuine progress by the summer of 1941 with the entrance of British troops and Free French forces into Syria and Lebanon. It could be said that this was a pivotal moment for those Lebanese Leaders whose dreams were to see an independent Greater Lebanon with the borders of 1920 which was not under the hegemony and domination of a single community but belonged to them all (Ziser 2000).

Under pressure from the British Government, France, through the Free French High Commissioner, General George Catroux, publicly issued “a statement proclaiming France’s commitment to the Independence of the States in the region” (Ziser 2000:26), but continued to exercise its authority even after reaffirming on 26 September 1941 this commitment in a second declaration of independence. In 1943, Lebanon formed its first democratic government of independence and amended the constitution which ended the mandate.

The response of the French authorities was to arrest and imprison the Prime Minister, President and several others. It can still be argued, however, that despite this the elections of 1943, in which the parliament and the president and government were chosen, constituted the practice of real Democracy. They were contested by the two Kiyaniist parties as well as the ‘anti-Lebanese’ elements without obvious foreign interference. This was perhaps a result of a timely balance between the authority of the officials of the French mandate and the newer British influence.

## **A. 1943 National Pact**

In 1943, when Lebanon finally gained independence under the government of the Constitutional Bloc and its Muslim allies, the whole population had divided opinions regarding the so-called National pact: Intellectuals and Politicians supported it on one side, and others criticized it on the other side. In actuality, as Kamal Salibi has outlined, what was agreed was an unwritten gentlemen's contract between the Constitutional Bloc and its Christian leaders and the Muslim leaders with the aim of bolstering Lebanon's formal constitution and at the same time ensuring its effectiveness (Salibi 1988).

It is suggested by the majority of scholars that 1943 National Pact "was not, in fact a formal constitution but rather an addendum to the constitution" (Deegan 1993:106) or that it was a "Para-constitutional implicit pact" (Salameh 1996:2-3). On the other hand, it should be stressed that the Pact is the constitution translated in procedural terms. It therefore functioned, even more than the constitution, as a testing ground of the consociational model that was later put in place in Lebanon, as it reflected how some social groups of Lebanon held such a dominant position, and how this results in the effective exclusion of other social groups. Suleiman, for example, describes the pact as the "unwritten constitution of Lebanon" (Suleiman 1967:21) and Hudson characterises it as "an act of creative statesmanship by two liberal politicians" and "Lebanon's "real" constitution" (Hudson 1995:733).

Kamal Salibi wrote that what was generally understood, from the very beginning, was that the National Pact involved Muslim consent to the continued existence of Lebanon as an independent and sovereign state in the Arab World, provided it considered itself, so to speak, part of the Arab family. Salibi has demonstrated in his book that the pact had the result, in a way, that the Christian Maronites in the country "could keep the key political, security and military positions as their special preserve: the presidency of the republic; the directorate of public security; the command of the army" (Salibi 1988). This is in regard to Christians, but in regard to Sunnite Muslims, they were guaranteed

the premiership of the government while some other key positions were distributed equally among the different Lebanese communities (Salibi 1988).

However, this researcher thinks that it is more important to point out the convergence of procedure which came about as a result of given internal and external factors, rather than talking about how the division of power between Christians and Muslims happened. As mentioned above, there is no doubt that the defeat of France in 1940 deprived the High Commissioner of prestige and power and provided an opportunity to Lebanese leaders to meet and consult. At the same time, Britain began to call on Lebanese leaders suggesting the idea of the independence of Lebanon and to support it publicly. Britain approached the powers of independence in Lebanon, and was brought into a direct confrontation with France which was trying to keep its influence. In the context of this confrontation, the UK worked on bringing together and reconciling the pro-independence figures of the Christian and Muslim communities, and helped Bechara El Khoury, a candidate for the Presidency, to meet with leaders from Egypt and Syria, which led to a loose agreement on the plan which El Khoury would adopt in case he became President of the Republic. In this context, Bechara El Khoury writes in his book *Lebanese facts*:

*“The Consul of Egypt in Lebanon Ahmed Ramzi visited him in May 1942 and handed him an invitation from the Prime Minister of Egypt to visit Cairo to discuss the Arab cooperation, also the same invitation was received by the Foreign Minister of Syria, for the same reason”* (Al Khoury 1961:245).

In June 1942, a preliminary involving several leaders took place in Cairo. Bechara al-Khoury stated after the meeting that “it is necessary to cooperate with Arab countries, with a condition of keeping and protecting Lebanon's independence, and that there was incompatibility between him and the leaders of Egypt and Syria, who attended the meeting” (Al Khoury 1961:245).

These internal and external facts allowed internal convergence, and contributed in facilitating the birth of the National pact, which can be summarized as the following:

- 1- Lebanese Muslims relinquish and stop demanding unity with Syria or joining any other Arab entity.
- 2- Lebanese Christians give up their adherence to French or foreign protection for them and for the Lebanon.
- 3- Keeping Lebanon's independence and its full sovereignty, and not having and treaty with any foreign country that grants this country any privilege or any special position.
- 4- The full recognition of Lebanese Muslims in the Lebanese entity and also of the Lebanese borders of 1920.
- 5- The full recognition of the Arab countries, especially Syria, of this entity, its sovereignty and independence.
- 6- The sovereign and independent Lebanon should be considered a corporative member in and with the Arab family (Rabbath 1986:545).

Consequently, it is clear that Lebanon's internal maturity, coupled with external factors, helped and led to the birth of the National Pact. Perhaps, that both the Lebanese Muslims were convinced to abandon the idea of unity with Syria, as well as that the Lebanese Christians were to abandon the idea of asking for foreign protection, led to the birth of this pact.

To sum up, this pact was the the main foundation on which Lebanon was established, and it placed internal convergence before calls of unity with Arabs and calls for foreign protection. Perhaps this delicate balance was the national political balance which supported the foundation of Lebanon as a free, independent and sovereign state and perhaps the experience has shown that if any of the internal political parties, Islamic and Christian, works to overcome this balance, then it undermines and endangers internal stability.

## **B. The 1926 Constitutionalised Confessional System**

Confessionalism is important in the history of modern Lebanon and was widespread within its community and political system directly after the weakness of the Ottoman

Empire had emerged. Social backwardness was apparent in the system of the Ottoman Empire and was accompanied by political repression and cultural paralysis, which together were a suitable environment for the emergence of partisanship and intolerance. Unfortunately, this led to a critical situation: instead of the religious diversity of Lebanon acting as a source of spiritual, cultural and political enrichment, it became rather a heavy burden. Surprisingly, this situation favoured some local political parties, and thus made them supportive of relocating religion into a confessional and sectarian ideology as a prelude to later tightening their grip on society.

These events and facts helped to later forge a Lebanese Republic based on the idea of "confessionalism", based on the following theory: the Lebanese political community consisted of human groups, not citizens, belonging to their sects, and that Lebanon as a state consists of eighteen sects, but not of citizens. Therefore, for these reasons, the citizens' affiliation with their homeland and their representation in the state and its political system cannot be structured directly but rather through their own private sects and communities.

More precisely, Lebanon, like other countries in the region, has many different religious groups and ethnic communities, but, unlike other countries, Lebanon was the only state that recognized these sects and ethnicities in its constitution. The Lebanese Constitution of 1926 officially recognizes 17 religious families (now they are 18): 12 Christian sects, 5 Muslim sects and Jews. Consequently, with the announcement of its constitution, segmental autonomy and confessionalism appeared to clearly take on a new aspect. We may ask ourselves how this could happen.

Regarding segmental autonomy, if we examine the Lebanese constitution, we will find that Article 9 recognises the freedom of conscience, the freedom and respect of religion and general belief, and the respect of affairs of personal status:

*"Liberty of conscience is absolute. By rendering homage to the Almighty, the State respects all creeds and guarantees and protects their free exercise, on condition that*



*they do not interfere with public order. It also guarantees to individuals, whatever their religious allegiance, respect of their personal status and religious interests.”<sup>27</sup>*

Article 10 of the constitution acknowledges the right of the different religious sects to have and run their own schools and teaching institutions, as long as this does not harm public order:

*“Education is free so long as it is not contrary to public order and to good manners and does not touch the dignity of creeds. No derogation shall affect the right of communities to have their schools, subject to the general prescriptions on public education adicted by the state.”<sup>28</sup>*

An in depth analysis of Article 9 shows that it is not the type of article that could damage Lebanon’s society or political system, as it refers to different communities, beliefs and religions. Considered alongside Article 10, however, we will find different outcome. Although the legislator’s goal in both was to formally permit these different groups to keep their own religious beliefs and values, it is such laws that, whether deliberately or not, can create a community with different cultural bases. Such closely match Arend Lijphart’s description of segmental authority which results in greater plurality and in the greater individuality of communities (Lijphart 1980). Furthermore, both articles resulted in:

1. An increase in societal separatism: i.e. a negative impact on societal stability and therefore on the stability of the Lebanese system as a whole.
2. Religious and sectarian intolerance: loyalties to particular sects of party leaders were place before loyalty to the state and Lebanon itself.

These articles, then, and particular Article 10, have allowed all the different communities a false sense of their own individuality and distinctiveness. They have helped, in stopping the formation across all levels of society, regardless of sect, of a common national educational system, in forming the procedural separations within

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<sup>27</sup> Article 9 of the Lebanese Constitution

<sup>28</sup> Article 10 of the Lebanese Constitution

Lebanese society. Furthermore, the existence of different religious courts, which regulate the affairs of different communal groups, shows the influence of such segmental autonomy, as does the existence of a superfluous number of schools, welfare organisation, hospitals, clinics, charities, televisions, radios, construction companies and even supermarkets. To add to this, there are divisions within each sect, with each group attending its own place of worship, which also function to attract others and influence its own supporters. Put differently, the factors outlined above were the means and instruments of ideological dissemination which lead to greater and greater divisions in society, and therefore helped to facilitate manipulation by the elites.

In relation to Confessionalism, there is clearly a paradox in the Constitution. Article 12 of the Constitution states:

*“All Lebanese citizens are equally admitted to all functions without any other cause for preference except their merit and competence and according to the conditions set by law. A special statute shall govern Civil Servants according to the administrations to which belong.”<sup>29</sup>*

Article 95, which speaks about communal representation, however, effectively weakened Article 12. It states: “Temporarily, and in deference to equity and accord, the various sects shall be equitably represented in public offices and in the formation of Cabinets, barring any detriment to the interests of the state.”<sup>30</sup>

The article above (which was later changed in the Ta’if Accord of 1989, but not since), stipulates that there should be equitable representation of the various communities in public employment and in the Cabinet. So, any of the main sects would be entitled through the constitution to more than a third of government ministries if they had due representation in Parliament. Also, as every community is entitled to a proportional share of the state’s resources as political power, this article has a relevance to the political and economic factors of Lebanon’s system of government.

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<sup>29</sup> Article 12 of the Lebanese Constitution

<sup>30</sup> Article 95 of the Lebanese Constitution

The system outlined above for recruitment to the civil service and political representation, however, proves to be damaging to the interests of the state and the country. Relative representation of the communes, particularly in the civil service, embodies such an approach to confessionalism. It may force the state to recruit more officials in the state, army and education system than are necessary, only to satisfy the criteria on the representation of different communes, and it also may prevent, irrespective of difficult communal considerations, the state from effectively providing for the needs of the population.<sup>31</sup>

We conclude with the words of Ghassan Tuani: “in constitutional terms, Lebanese democracy moved from the doctrine of separation of powers to the notion of the distribution of powers among the communities, a strange and most impractical form of partition”. Article 95 will provide evidence of this. Furthermore, we shall see that it contains an inbuilt tension which results in communal resentment and therefore has a negative impact on social stability. It could even lead to communal conflict and therefore a reduction in the likelihood of a stable democratic system.

### 3.4 The Pre-war Lebanese Political System

The traditional definition of any political system demonstrates that political systems are organizations of governance with three branches: executive, legislative and judicial. According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, a Political System is a “set of formal legal institutions that constitute a government or a state.”<sup>32</sup> The same source acknowledges that this definition, which is accepted and used by numerous legislators, researchers and analyses of developed political systems and their legal constitutional frameworks, takes

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<sup>31</sup> In most of the Lebanese ministries, there is a surplus of staff that does not work or attend at all. They were and still are employed in order to serve the principle of finding the sectarian balance needed, as well as to favor the Lebanese political leaders.

<sup>32</sup> "Political system", © *Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.* Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc... 05 Mar. 2011.  
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/467746/political-system>

in both real and prescribed modes of political behaviour, that is both the reality of how a state functions and its legal organisational framework.<sup>33</sup>

In the coming section, we will define the Lebanese Political System, its institutions, and examine how it functions. The aim is to discover whether the Lebanese Political System meets the democratic standards of democratic political systems or not.

### **3.4.1 Institutions**

Institutions are to be defined as those bodies which have been formed through democratic politics within constitutional rules. Terry M. Moe has examined the different types of institutions normally created by democracies. He argues that the legislative, executive and judicial institutions, i.e. those with authority, which are constitutionally prescribed as well as the system of democratic rule, are the focal point for studies by political scientists (Moe 2005). These, then, are the institutions by which we will structure the following sections.

#### **3.4.1.1 Executive Branch**

The executive branch of the Lebanese government consists of the President, the Prime Minister and the Cabinet (Council of Ministers) which is chosen by the Prime Minister in consultation with the President and members of the Assembly of Representatives.

##### **a. The Presidency**

The Lebanese Constitution, promulgated in 1926, was inspired by many articles of the French Constitutional Laws of 1875 which were in force at that time, especially with regard to the powers granted to the President of the Republic. It is not difficult to examine this position, as it is sufficient to examine the constitutional texts which lay out the powers of the chief of the executive branch of the Third French Republic and compare these with the powers that were given to the Lebanese President before the constitutional amendments of the Taif accord. This comparison reveals that both of them were granted the right to:

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<sup>33</sup> "Political system", © Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc... Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc... 05 Mar. 2011.  
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/467746/political-system>

- 1- Propose laws.
- 2- Authenticate laws passed by the legislative authorities.
- 3- Issue special amnesty.
- 4- Negotiate and conclude international treaties.
- 5- Appoint who they find appropriate in all civil and military positions.

Before the amendment of the Lebanese constitution by the Lebanese political leaders who met in the city of Taif in Saudi Arabia, this constitution expressly stipulated that the President had the right to appoint the ministers and choose one of them to become Prime Minister, and also the right to dismiss them all.

After amending the constitution in Taif, the the President of the Republic's share of power was reduced in a way which transformed him from monopolizing power to sharing it. Most of the power was shifted from him to the Cabinet and to the Prime Minister who became a visible partner in forming the cabinet and signing the decree of its formation. Therefore, after having been at the mercy of the President who had the right to dismiss him, he became a real partner in power.

Perhaps the most important amendment that took place was the way of choosing the Prime Minister, as the President was now obliged to stick to the outcome of the Parliamentary consultations which were conducted by MPs casting their ballots for the person they believed most appropriate to head the Cabinet. Moreover, the full executive authority which the President used to exercise with the help of ministers was taken from him and entrusted to the Cabinet as a whole, as well as the power to conduct international treaties, dismiss cabinet ministers and appoint first class government officials. Also, the Taif constitutional amendments took from him the right to develop the agenda of the cabinet, coordinate between the ministers and monitor the situation of public departments and institutions. Needless to say, these rights were given to the Prime Minister.

However, the President of the Republic remained in the constitution after the Taif Agreement as the Head of State and the symbol of the unity of the country, and the trustee of respecting the constitution and preserving Lebanon's independence, unity and

territorial integrity. In this case, Thomas Collelo argues that the President should now work together with the Prime Minister and that they are the most influential figures in the executive. He also argues that they and are able to exercise personal and immediate influence over their deputies and other political figures (Collelo 1987).

The constitution states that “the President presides over the Supreme Defence Council and is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces which fall under the authority of the Council of Ministers”, and is “elected by secret ballot and by a two thirds majority of the Chamber of Deputies” and that his “term is for six years”.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, the constitution lays out clearly the duration of his term in the presidency, and also about the case of re-electing the same president by mentioning that “he may not be re-elected until six years after the expiration of his last mandate.”<sup>35</sup>

To sum up, it might be rightly argued that the President’s role meets, theoretically, the democratic standards called for by the constitution, as it does not exercise any absolute monopoly of power. However, on the other hand, there are many questions that arise: Did the institution of the presidency manage, before the civil war of 1975, during it, and after the Taif agreement, to play its role impartially and without any obstacles or interventions? And thus, did the President violate, willingly or unwillingly, the constitution which specified his role clearly? And so, did the President protect one of the democratic institutions in the country, which is the institution of the presidency? Apparently, the “1975 Civil War has left an indelible mark on the institution of the presidency” (Collelo 1987), which resulted in the office being more accountable to the demands of the President’s narrow community, rather than the result of homeland unity. In addition, the pre-Taif era did not differ from post-Taif era, as external factors continued to affect the institution of the presidency and the President himself. External actors such as Syria and Israel managed to influence the presidential elections before 1975, and after the Taif agreement Syria kept its influence, while other countries took over the Israeli role. Iran, France, the United States and Saudi Arabia, in addition to

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<sup>34</sup> The Lebanese constitution , Article 49 of Chapter 3.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

Syria, directly or through their proxies managed to intervene in every arcane detail, and this interference in some cases led to a flagrant violation of the constitution.<sup>36</sup>

Finally, an examination of how the constitution was violated, and thus how the democratic standards were not respected, will be pursued in detail in the coming two chapters which discuss the internal and external hindrances of the Lebanese Democracy and the external hegemony.

#### **b. The Prime Ministry and the Council of Ministers**

As mentioned above, the Lebanese President, after the constitutional changes of the Taif Agreement, did not become more constitutionally empowered to appoint the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. Rather, constitutionally, he became obliged to accept the result of the parliamentary consultations and so was committed to the majority decision of the MPs. In other words, although a Prime Minister does not have to be a member of the Chamber of Deputies, he normally has been, particularly because the President is required to consult with the deputies before a Prime Minister is named. The composition of the Cabinet is agreed by the President and the Prime Minister and they present the nominees to the Chamber of Deputies to solicit a vote of confidence (Collelo 1987).

It is clear that, before Taif, the constitutional powers of the Prime Minister were limited. This changed after the agreement as the Prime Minister gained a greater share of governance, as mentioned above. His appointment was no longer the decision of the President. This gave him a real strength, whereas before Taif he had lacked effective methods of action.

There have been about 23 presidents since independence, and these have formed about 90 cabinets. Collelo argues that the Cabinet is the administrative body in Lebanon, as it is supposed to prepare legislative bills, set policy and appoint or dismiss top figures of the bureaucracy (Collelo 1987).<sup>37</sup> That is the theory, but in practice, the situation is

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<sup>36</sup>Amending the constitution at the behest of the Syrian regime which led to extending the period of two post-Taif sitting presidents.

quite different. The ministers that often use their positions to add to their personal wealth or increase their networks of patronage within their constituencies are not a group of officials with attitudes and goals that are in the interest of the whole country, but are the products of the political leaders that proposed and appointed them (Collelo 1987). Therefore, they function chiefly to satisfy their leaders, political parties they belong to and their communities. Furthermore, they function to “accommodate diverse sectarian interests” (Collelo 1987).

In addition, history shows that the House of Representatives (the Parliament), which constitutionally has the right to withdraw its confidence from any government, has never done so since the creation of the Lebanese State. To explain further, according to the constitution, Lebanon is a Parliamentary Democratic Republic based on the separation of powers, which means that the basis of this parliamentary system is having the Cabinet presenting and submitting its ministerial statement to the Parliament to get the vote of confidence, and in return, the Cabinet has the right of dissolving the Parliament, after a direct request from the President of the Republic to the Council of Ministers to this end. But things are different in Lebanon, as they do not function the way they are set out. The Parliament does not withdraw confidence from the Cabinet nor does the Cabinet dissolve the Parliament, even if the conditions for dissolution were clear and available.

To sum up, the above discussion raises some questions about the effectiveness of the Lebanese cabinets that have been in power, and the reasons that stand blocking and paralyzing its operation, and thus preventing it from functioning democratically as it should do. Also, this leads us to question how much external factors are sometimes involved in paralyzing the Cabinet’s work, and other times allowing it to operate and function only when they implement their agendas. And then whether the Prime Minister can reach that office without the acquiescing to or taking into consideration the will of external actors. And thus, whether democracy functions properly in Lebanon if it is proved that there is external intervention in its institutions. Again, these questions will be discussed in the coming two chapters which examine the hindrances to Lebanese democracy and the external hegemony.



### **3.4.1.2 Legislative Branch**

#### **a. Assembly of Representatives (The Parliament)**

Michel Chiha, the Lebanese thinker who is considered one of the fathers of the Lebanese Constitution, argues that shared past the common history are the basis of a collective memory that provides each individual with the will of common life, and that the parliamentary system is the only system that opens the way for the freedom of practicing such a common life (Chiha 1964). With regard to the Parliament, Chiha demonstrates that it should not be only an expression of democracy, but also a place where different sectarian groups meet, so they can express their desire to live together (Chiha 1964), as the Parliament, Chiha continues, is a beautiful attempt to have and see a peaceful cohabitation between different religions, traditions and ethnic groups (Chiha 1964).

As agreed in the constitution, the Lebanese political system is a parliamentary system where the Parliament, since independence, has enjoyed a privileged position, as general elections that take place every four years let it derive its authority directly from the people of Lebanon. The Parliament enjoys wide legislative and monitoring powers which cover all aspects of public life. It is the place where laws are passed to govern the entire state and to monitor and correct the government's work. In this context, Collelo writes that "the Constitution details the duties and procedures of the Chamber of Deputies and grants it considerable authority in such matters as budgetary oversight and amending the Constitution" (Collelo 1987). In addition, the Parliament exercises a crucial and fateful role in the emergence of other authorities as the Parliament elects the President and the parliamentary consultations lead to the assignment of a new government which cannot rule before gaining the vote of confidence of the Parliament.

The Lebanese Parliament, which is divided equally between Christians and Muslims, was never a two-party parliament. To be more accurate and precise, party politics have played almost no part in Lebanon and candidates campaign as part of a "list" sponsored by a local political leader (Collelo 1987). In other words, as Collelo states, a

“competition within districts is intra-sectarian, in which, for example, a Greek Catholic from one list would campaign against Greek Catholics from other lists” (Collelo 1987). However, perhaps one quasi-attempt at two-party politics recently happened in Lebanon in the elections of 2009, where the March 14 and March 8 coalitions competed in most constituencies.

Despite the obvious un-representativeness and unfairness in the electoral system and laws, and, of course, the misuse of public money and the issue of candidates bribing voters, which will be discussed in later chapters, many important constitutional reforms took place in Taif. These reforms, however, apparently did not prevent the Speaker from controlling the mechanism that regulates the meetings of the parliament in its regular or exceptional sessions. For example, after 2005, at the height of the division that hit the political life of Lebanon, the Speaker of the Parliament aligned himself with the opposition and refused to invite the Parliament to convene because the parliamentary majority at that time was in favour of the political group he supported and belonged to. Although Article 65 in the constitution speaks about the dissolution of the Parliament in case it does not convene, in Lebanon constitutional articles, because of their lack of clarity, need constitutional scholars to interpret them, and until they do the democratic system will suffer from massive violations.

### **3.4.1.3 Judicial Branch**

Lebanon’s legal system takes inspiration and basis from that of France and, like France, it is classed as a country of civil law which employs its own set of codes. The most important of this, the “Code of Obligations and Contracts”, was set out in 1932 at the time of the French Mandate and is the equivalent of the French Civil Code, aside from matters of personal status, such as marriage, divorce and inheritance. The sectarian diversity of Lebanon requires that such personal issues are rather governed by separated sets of laws that are particular to its different communities. Christians, for example, resolve issues of personal status in the Christian spiritual courts, whereas Muslims use the Islamic courts.

However, the courts in Lebanon are divided as follows:

***a. The Constitutional Council***

This Council is charged with ensuring that laws are consistent with the constitution, and also with considering and settling any claims about parliamentary and presidential elections.

***b. The Administrative Court***

The “Shoura Council” is the most important administrative court and it is required to review the decisions of the lesser administrative courts. It also has a role in assisting with the drafting and reviewing of legislation to be put in place by the Legislature.

***c. The Civil Courts***

The civil courts can be divided as follows:

First degree courts: charged with examining claims of civil law and composed with one judge or a panel of three judges. Those with one judge are usually charged with claims of less importance than those with a panel of judges.

Courts of appeal: located in each governorate and serve as a second degree court which can review decisions taken in the lower court.

Court of Cassation: the ultimate judicial recourse, this will only deal with cases of greater importance.

***d. The Commercial Courts:***

These can be classed in the same category as civil courts but are able to rule on commercial matters.

***e. The Criminal Courts:***

These are organized along the same lines as the civil and commercial courts above, however the first degree courts are responsible for dealing with cases involving misdemeanors and felonies. They are subject to review by the Court of Appeal.

The Court of Appeal is the second degree court for the same types of cases, and is the first degree court for more serious criminal offences, which are subject to review by the Court of Cassation.

***f. The Personal Status Courts:***

These are made up of clergymen and have the responsibility for matters of personal status relating to their own sects. They are subject to review by the higher civil courts.

Having outlined above the courts that comprise the judicial branch in Lebanon, it is important to now discuss this branch and the problems that it has encountered and still does that prevent it from functioning properly. Collelo argues that the judiciary branch used to reflect various features which are familiar to western European systems, particularly that of France, but like other branches of government, “the judiciary suffered as a result of the 1975 Civil War and the ensuing disruptions” (Collelo 1987).

Collelo, who describes the Lebanese society as being based on patronage, argues that political meddling in judicial affairs is common in Lebanon, as political leaders exert pressure on judges and are very often able to influence their rulings (Collelo 1987). His conviction in this matter is based on observers who have illustrated that confessionalism has also disrupted the judicial system in its selection of judges and also in the determination of criminal penalties (Collelo 1987). To explain further, in Lebanon, mystery surrounds the role of the judicial system, as while all political leaders insist on the independence of the judiciary pursuant to what is approved in the constitution, it is clear that there is a general lack of impartiality in the judiciary and limitations to its ability to act as an independent authority. The former President of Lebanon Suleiman Frangieh demonstrates this in a letter to Charles Helou, who was also a Lebanese President, by saying that “In a small country like Lebanon, where the norm is that political life is at the service of individuals rather than institutions, the prevailing belief was that that it is difficult to keep the judiciary in complete isolation from political interference in all its aspects” (quoted in Nawaf 1996) Walid Junblatt, the Druze leader, argues in this context that ultimately the judge in Lebanon is an

employee of the political powers, and that he himself is a politician that puts pressure on judges and that any politician who says otherwise is a liar (quoted in Salam 1996).

To sum up, constitutionally the judicial branch is an independent authority, but the above discussion reveals that the rule of law in Lebanon is only one point of view and that the judiciary is not an independent authority in itself, but suffers from various political interventions, and this is incompatible with democracy which is based on the separation of powers.

## **3.5 Political Parties and Media**

### **3.5.1 Political Parties and its role**

Earlier, we pointed out the principles and basic standards of democracy and argued that any democratic system should take into consideration these principles if it is to be called and described as a democracy. Some of these main principles are ensuring public and political freedoms, in particular the freedom of expression and association.

For decades, perhaps one of the most significant features that have distinguished Lebanon from its Arab neighbours is that it is an anti-authoritarian state, which has no one ruling party and no official state ideology (Nawaf 1966). Additionally, while power in many parts of the Arab world was being acquired by parties using violent means, which subsequently made these regimes authoritarian with militarized institutions, this did not occur in Lebanon. Here, political parties could operate openly and actively in a pluralistic society under a government that was not authoritarian. Khazen has described this as a 'neutral state', and as such the state does not control all social and economic capabilities or claim that it alone owns the truth. These conditions, including open political parties and functioning civil society, are not seen as having been granted by the government, or as a waiver of certain powers and rights that this government had achieve by violent means (el Khazen 2002).

In Lebanon, political parties existed before the state, which was founded in 1920, and Lebanon's major communities of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have been associated with one or more parties (el Khazen 2003:607). MP Farid el Khazen, the Professor of Political science and the former chairman of the Department of Political Studies and Public Administration at the American University of Beirut, speaks about three generations of political parties which have emerged in Lebanon. The first generation emerged during the French mandate, the second generation emerged after independence and the third generation emerged during the civil war of 1975 (el Khazen 2003:605). Khazen considers that Lebanon's political parties are comparable to such organisations in other countries (both Western and non-Western), since they had their origins in two areas: 1. institutional or internal, i.e. from inside government institutions, usually those operating in the legislative process or electoral politics; 2. external (crises or developments), these are connected to factors of modernization and a changing society, such as conflict, mass education, economic development and conflict. Examples of the first kind are such parties as the Constitutional Bloc Party, the National Bloc Party, and the National Liberal Party, which appeared after coalitions in parliament. Whereas parties like the Kata'ib (Kataeb, Phalanges) Party, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP), the Lebanese Communist Party (LCP), and the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) can be placed in the second category, as they were founded due to certain social, political and ideological developments. Social divisions (political, ideological and confessional) and elite rivalries have been paralleled in the political parties. These differ greatly in influence, size and representation across the regions. Some have relevance to a national audience and so can call on a broad base of support, while others are confined to single regions or communities, or even to a particular place in a particular city (el Khazen 2003).

One or more parties have come to be seen as representative of Lebanon's major communities. Post 1920, for example, the Maronite community identified with parties with various political and ideological ideas, but the Druze community became to be represented by the Progressive Socialist Party. This was led by Kamal Junblatt, who had founded the party towards the end of the 1940s and was its leader until his assassination in 1977. In the early 1970s, the Shi'i community began to identify with certain parties: firstly the Movement of the Deprived, which then became Amal, and a decade later

Hezbollah (The party of God), which was supported by Iran. The Sunni community, both before and after independence, usually favoured Arab nationalist parties. The Armenian community followed its own parties which involved themselves with Armenian affairs and communal interests. These were mostly removed from the political process apart from during elections to the parliament. Lebanon's leftist and nationalist parties, on the other hand, were not associated in this way with any particular group or region (el Khazen 2003).

However, in the post-war era, nothing much really changed. The Christian Maronites kept their association with the Lebanese Christian parties, the Phalanges and the Free Patriotic Movement, and a large number of Sunni's moved to associate with the Future Movement, while Hezbollah and Amal monopolized the Shiite scene.

However, these parties mentioned above, did and still do suffer from major problems:

- 1- The power structure of these parties did not engage with any democratic practice in any way, e.g. through elections.
- 2- Most of these parties imitated and still imitate the secular temperament of Lebanese society (after 2005 the secular barriers were reduced a little as wide political coalitions were formed; also, both the Future Movement Party and the Free Patriotic Movement tried to overcome the barriers by appointing party officials from other sects).
- 3- All parties, including the secular parties which overcame confessional obstacles, failed to demonstrate a national agenda and were and still are subject to various foreign political and ideological influences coming from Arab and non-Arab countries (chiefly the Iranian-backed Hezbollah, which in addition to being influenced by foreign political and ideological influences, still did not go through any official registration procedure, and thus did not get a permit of establishment from the Ministry of Interior).
- 4- Most of these political parties were involved in armed conflicts during the 1975 civil war. Hezbollah, in addition to its involvement in the civil war, was involved in various armed conflicts with Israel in the post-war era and used its military strength to take over and control the entire city of Beirut in 2008.

Political parties in Lebanon face a deep problem which stems from them opposing the concept of democracy when dealing with internal issues. In other words, the prevailing model of these political parties opposes democracy and their structure defies wholly the actual mechanisms of representative democracy. Furthermore, the relationship between the Lebanese parties and its partisans is conducted only through two channels and not more: the first channel is the sectarian channel and the second channel is the channel of the leader's personality.

Party activities in Lebanon are linked to the leader in a way which makes him dominate the party and, as a result, the relationship between the party and its supporters becomes a relationship between the supporters and the party leader. Here lies the danger that such a model of relations between the supporters and the party leader makes the community accept the idea of political inheritance within the party, and this is contrary to how parties work institutionally.

To sum up, the Lebanese political system has proved itself stronger than its political parties, and this is not a healthy scene. If we examine how things happen in Europe, we will see that political parties are stronger than their political systems. In France, for example, the political system changed from a Monarchy to become a Republic, then the Republic moved from the First to the Fifth, and that happened because of the effectiveness of these political parties. In Lebanon, on the other hand, the political parties are in a unique position in the Arab world, since they had been able to operate during eighty years of uninterrupted activism. All the parties had the opportunity to influence policy and expand their base in the pre-war period. During the war, militias were in reality the ruling parties of the areas under their control (el Khazen 2003:605). These practices were internalized during the war, and political parties have not yet been able to break free from this model. Some which attempted the transition from militia to political party were not successful, and others were unwilling or unable to attempt it. Hezbollah, for example, which we shall examine later in detail, refused to disarm and hand its weapons to the government. In sum, the moral claim of being organisations superior to those of 'traditional' political parties has been lost since the pre-war period, and similarly the claim that they were forces for democracy and reform (el Khazen 2003:605).



### 3.5.2 Media in Lebanon

Lebanon's media has been described as a "beacon of plurality" in a region that houses some of the most restrictive media environments in the world. Its own media environment has long been viewed as open and diverse, and few of the censorship imposed in neighbouring countries can be found here. Religious, social and economic issues can be discussed, and criticism of the authorities and public figures is a common feature of many outlets.<sup>38</sup> Lebanon's pluralistic character is reflected in this open and diverse media scene. It has also meant that Beirut has become a shelter for Arab dissidents who have attacked Arab regimes in the newspapers of the Arab-speaking world (Kraidy 2011).

Oral and written freedom of expression, including the freedom of the press and of assembly and association are laid out in article 13 of the Lebanese constitution. The introduction to the constitution characterises that Lebanon as a parliamentary democratic republic with a basis in the respect of freedom of belief and expression, as well as other common liberties. Article 13 states that "The freedom to express one's opinion orally or in writing, the freedom of the press, the freedom of assembly, and the freedom of association are guaranteed within the limits established by law."<sup>39</sup> But to date, Lebanon does not have any law which gives citizens the right to the access of information or protection for whistle-blowers or those individuals who report corruption (El Rafei 2006). Also Lebanon does not have any electronic media law which regulates this sector in a way that guarantees citizens the right of freedom of expression.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> International Press Institute, "*Media in Lebanon: Reporting on a Nation Divided*", Report on IPI's Fact Finding Mission to Lebanon - 8-13 December 2006.  
[http://www.freemedia.at/fileadmin/media/Documents/IPI\\_mission\\_reports/Lebanon\\_Mission\\_Report.pdf](http://www.freemedia.at/fileadmin/media/Documents/IPI_mission_reports/Lebanon_Mission_Report.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> The Lebanese Constitution.

<sup>40</sup> In 2010, the Lebanese authorities arrested four people who used the social networking website Facebook to slander President Michel Suleiman. The justice ministry said in a statement that media freedom in Lebanon and any civilised country reaches its limits when the content is pure slander and aims at undermining the head of state. They argued in the statement that "The inappropriate comments published on websites are subject to prosecution and punishment as they meet the requirements for litigation as stipulated in the media law and penal code." Such action is an assault to the freedom of expression.

Kraidy, the Associate Professor in the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, has however argued that private broadcasting flourished during the 1974-1990 war. By 1990, over 100 radio stations and 50 television stations were functioning without any kind of overall framework, a unique situation in the history of modern broadcasting (El Rafei 2011). The 1990 Taif agreement, which ended the civil war in Lebanon, developed the general policies, procedures and enforcement measures for the media in Lebanon. It was mentioned in the agreement that "the information media shall be reorganized under the canopy of the law and within the framework of responsible liberties that serve the cautious tendencies and the objectives of ending the state of war".<sup>41</sup>

Developing countries, according to Kraidy, use the media in general to strengthen national unity and promote socio-economic progress, national reconciliation and reconstruction (Kraidy 2011). On one hand, it could be argued that the Lebanese media, regardless of its blurred relationship with politics, helped in the reconstruction process after the civil war and also in the promotion of civil peace, to a certain extent.<sup>42</sup> But on the other hand, there was other private media promoting a contradictory project. Calling itself the Station of Resistance, Hezbollah's Al-Manar TV, which began broadcasting in 1991, became a mass media outlet with a global audience. Continuous funding from Iran, as well as its privileged position within Lebanon, has allowed the station to grow rapidly into a complete satellite station from its beginnings as a disorganised underground operation (Kraidy 2011).

This huge number of media outlets has allowed us to believe that media in general is thriving in Lebanon, but facts show that it is growing without being framed within any healthy framework. In other words, most of the media in Lebanon were granted 'sectarian licenses' but not 'national licenses', and their existence was based on some political considerations but not with the purpose of fostering Lebanese unity. Moreover, it is usual that during periods of political stability the media shows a kind of moderation which ends as soon as political tension returns. Political parties in Lebanon which have

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<sup>41</sup> The Taif agreement of 1990.

<sup>42</sup> Rafik Hariri, the former Prime Minister used his private media and other media which used to benefit from him (TV stations and Newspapers) to promote to his reconstruction project which he managed to succeed in.

established their newspapers, magazines, and radio and television stations, use their media to criticize the government as well as to achieve their objectives even if it causes political and sectarian tension in the country.

At this point, we should return to what we outlined above in the theory chapter about the theories of Dahl. He argued that access to information is one of the fundamental rights guaranteed to citizens in a democracy, and this is intended to produce responsible and informed citizens capable of making decisions healthy for a democracy. Access to information and free media also have the purpose of placing checks on politicians and officials. They can monitor whether they are acting in the interests of the electorate and fulfilling their election promises. This is not how they function in Lebanon. The media, by behaving in the irresponsible manner outlined above, aggravates social, political and sectarian tensions within the country. This is symptomatic of an aspect of democracy that is not working properly.

In connection to this, Karl Popper discusses freedom by mentioning the following story:

*"An American is accused of having struck someone on the nose. He defends himself by arguing that, as a free citizen, he has the liberty to move his fists in any direction he pleases. To which the Judge replies: the freedom to move your fists has its limits, and these may sometimes change. But the noses of your fellow-citizen nearly always lie outside those limits" (Popper 1997:73-74).*

Actually, Popper when he mentioned this story was discussing the theory of the state and freedom, but it might be helpful for us to use it to point out that freedom, when used as a tool to abuse others, is no more rightful and no more accepted. In other words, it can no longer be called Freedom. The aforementioned can be applied on the Lebanese media, since it has never used the freedom it was granted to address people's problems and to speak out about corruption and other troubles the country suffers from. Many times, however, it used this freedom, granted by the political parties which fund it, to sow division in the country and among its people.

## 3.6 Post-civil War Period: Political reforms and failures

### 3.6.1 The Taif Agreement

In her book *Mirror of the Arab World, Lebanon in Conflict* Sandra Mackay, who has won awards for her writing on culture and politics in the Middle East, argues that after nine years of relentless civil war Lebanon was left broken in 1989 (Mackey 2008:131). Describing the real and realistic image of Lebanon at that time, she reported:

*“Militiamen standing guard over their respective enclaves outnumbered the army. A twenty-five-thousand-man Syrian army of occupation spread out over the north and east; Israel claimed its “security zone” in the south; the Hezbollah, provided bone and muscle by Iran, plotted the destruction of Lebanon as a secular state. Lebanon remained a country only through the symbolism of a sitting president accepted by all the major factions within the intricate Lebanese mosaic”* (Mackey 2008:131).

However, peace was exposed by other states, particularly Syria and some other countries, after fifteen years of war, and the Second Republic was created with the Taif Agreement. We should examine how this occurred. It was the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 1989 when 62 Lebanese MPs arrived in the city of Taif in Saudi Arabia. When the MPs arrived in Taif, they had the impression that the meeting would not take long, but the conference sessions, which began on the September the 30<sup>th</sup>, lasted for more than twenty days and ended on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October with an agreement which ended the civil war in Lebanon (Mackey 2008).

#### 3.6.1.1 The Reforms

In the opening session, which began with a speech by the late Saudi King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz on behalf of the Arab Tripartite Committee, a copy of the national accord document was distributed for discussion. Prince Saud al-Faisal, the Saudi Foreign Minister, and the rest of the members of the Tripartite Commission, followed the

proceedings of the conference moment by moment (Mansour 1993:31). It had emerged from the very beginning of the conferences that Prince Saud al-Faisal, the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, was in charge of the following details and intricacies of the debates, and was assisted by the former Algerian Foreign Minister Lakhdar Brahimi, and Rafik Hariri (Bkasini 1993).

It had emerged since the first day of the conference that the debate focused on two main issues: political reform and the issue of sovereignty, which is basically the issue of the redeployment of the Syrian troops. These split the MPs into several political axes. However, discussing political reform made the interlocutors divide along sectarian lines and begin to at times defend, and at times demand, powers for communal political positions, or for reaching communal political positions. The Christian MPs backed and defended the powers of the President of the Republic, while the Sunni MPs argued in their speeches for the strengthening of the powers of the Council of Ministers. The Shiite MPs focused on enhancing the powers of the Speaker. A little group of MPs who did not line up along sectarian lines backed the idea of having reasonable constitutional amendments. However, the sharp division between Christians and Muslims had already appeared during the discussion of the issue of sovereignty and the redeployment of the Syrian army. It happened that the Christians MPs, who backed scheduling the redeployment of Syrian troops, argued that this was one of the key conditions that must be met, and their position regarding other points would be based on how the discussion of the redeployment proceeded (Bkasini 1993).

However, the National Accord document which was approved in Taif included ten general principles, among them was an introduction to be added to the constitution which declared Lebanon a sovereign, independent, free, final homeland for all its citizens, united in its land, people and institutions, in the limits stipulated in this constitution and recognized internationally. This paragraph in the introduction, and specifically the statement that indicated that Lebanon is the final homeland for all its citizens, settled a long controversy and became a form of Islamic recognition of the finality of the Lebanese entity, which reassured the Christians. In addition, the amendments that were approved included the following: The presidency, the Parliament and the Prime Minister.

### ***1- The Presidency :***

The former Prime Minister Salim el-Hoss argues that the amendments made to the powers of the President of the Republic were a qualitative constitutional reform (El-Hoss 1991:102). Boutros Harb, the Maronite MP and the 2005 candidate for the presidency, mentions that the amendments were intended to solidify customs that were prevalent in written texts.<sup>43</sup> However, the main amendments in the reform are the following:

(a) - Entrust the executive authority to the Cabinet before it was granted to the President of the Republic. This amendment transferred the authority from the President of the Republic, the individual, to the Cabinet as a collective body which is accountable to the Parliament for its actions.

(b) – Before the amendments, it used to be that during the absence of the President of the Republic, the Council of Ministers was not allowed to assemble. But after the amendments, calling the Council of Ministers to assemble became a power of the Prime Minister, and if the President of the Republic attends, then he is not allowed to vote. However, the President of the Republic was given the power of veto for a period of fifteen days afterwards.

(c) - Choosing the Prime Minister became a result of binding parliamentary consultation, and it was for the Prime Minister to designate to hold parliamentary consultation. Also the Prime Minister was granted the right to make parliamentary and political consultations before the formation of the government, but in agreement with the President.

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<sup>43</sup> A statement to the Lebanese daily Al-nahar, 18/11/1994.

## ***2- The Prime Minister:***

The Prime Minister of the Council of Ministers was almost absent in the pre-Taif constitution of 1926, as he was only mentioned in the Constitution twice. The first mention was when it was pointed out that the President appoints the ministers and chooses from them a Prime Minister, and the second when it was indicated that the Prime Minister makes the Governmental statement in the House of Representatives. In both cases, the Constitution of 1926 did not give any powers to him at all. But in Taif, an independent section which addresses the Prime Minister was added and it outlined the following powers:

- 1 – He presides over the Council of Ministers, and shall be automatically the Vice-President of the Supreme Defence Council.
- 2 – He calls for parliamentary consultations to form the Cabinet and signs with the President the decree of forming it.
- 3 – He presents his cabinet's general policy to the House of Representatives.
- 4 – He signs with the President all decrees except that which designates him as Prime Minister and the decree of the government's resignation.
- 5 – He signs any decree calling for a special session and decrees issuing laws and re-examinations of them.
- 6 – He calls the Council of Ministers into a session and sets its agenda.
- 7 – He follows the work of public departments and institutions to coordinate between the ministers and give knowledgeable guidance to ensure proper functioning.
- 8 – He holds working sessions with stakeholders in the state in the presence of the competent minister.

## ***3- The parliament:***

A few amendments were added to the powers and the status of the House of Representatives and the Speaker, including the following:

1- Modifying the duration of the mandate of the Speaker of the House of Representatives from one year to four years like other parliamentary democracies.

2- Allowing the Council for one time only to withdraw their confidence after two years from electing the Speaker and his deputy.

3- Until the election of the Chamber of Deputies, to make up electoral law free of sectarian restriction and to distribute parliamentary seats in accordance with the following rules:

(a)- Equally between Christians and Muslims.

(b) - Proportionately between the sects of each religion.

(c) - Proportionately between the districts.

4- Increase the number of members of the House of Representatives to 128, divided equally between Christians and Muslims.

5- With the election of the first Chamber of Deputies on national and not sectarian basis, a senate shall be formed which represents all spiritual families and shall be confined to only crucial issues.

Moreover, the reforms did not include the three presidencies only, but they also affected other sectors, including media and information, education, and the courts. They also called for the adoption of administrative decentralization and the abolition of political sectarianism.



### **3.6.1.2 Militias Disarmed, Israel, Lebanese-Syrian Relations and Other Issues**

The Taif agreement did not ignore the issue of sovereignty and the militias that were involved in the civil war. These two issues were mentioned under a separate section entitled "Extending the state sovereignty over all the Lebanese territory". The agreement mentions that it has been concluded between the Lebanese parties to build a strong state based on the basis of national accord. The agreement reports that it is the mission of the first government of national unity to develop a security plan which aims to extend the state's sovereignty over all Lebanese territory through its own forces. However, the guidelines referred to by the agreement are the following:

- 1- The declaration revoking all the licences of all the Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias which are obliged to deliver their weapons to the Lebanese state within six months.
- 2- Strengthening the Internal Security Forces.
- 3- Strengthening the armed forces (The Lebanese army).

Also, the right of Lebanon to restore its authority to the Lebanese border with Israel was pointed out in the agreement. The agreement suggested that such a right could be achieved through the following:

- 1- Working on implementing Security Council Resolution 425 and the other international resolutions which call for the removal of the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon.
- 2- Adherence to the truce agreed with Israel which was signed in 1949.
- 3 - Taking all necessary measures for liberating all the Lebanese territories and restoring the state's sovereignty over all its territory and deploying the Lebanese army on the internationally recognised border.

The Taif agreement also addressed Lebanese-Syrian relations, pointing out that there should be a special relationship which brings benefits to both countries, while taking into consideration and respecting the sovereignty and independence of the two countries. Also, the agreement mentioned that Lebanon must not be a source of threats to Syria's security, and also asked Syria not to be a source of threats to Lebanon's security under any circumstances. Consequently, Lebanon must not become a pathway or a base for any force, state, or organization seeking to undermine its security or Syria's security, and that Syria is a country which supports Lebanon's security and independence, as well as unity and harmony among its citizens, and therefore does not permit any act that threatens its security, independence and sovereignty.

The agreement, which addressed the problem of the displaced Lebanese who left their villages during the civil war, proposed finding a solution for this problem, and recognized the right for each and every displaced citizen to return to the place he was displaced from.

### **3.6.1.3 The Taif Agreement: Approved but not Applied**

The agreement was a compromise between many groups in Lebanon – leaders, political parties and militias – and was intended to address problems of Lebanese sovereignty and the structure of the political system. Indeed, the agreement helped to put an end to the war and provided the best way to remove Lebanon from the contemporary regional conflicts. However, we should consider whether the agreement reached these goals, i.e. whether it was properly respected and applied to strengthen Lebanon's sovereignty and rebuild its damaged political system.

On one hand, looking at the amendments and reforms that were made to the political system, including the attempt to strengthen the general participation of the sects, reveals that each sect received its specific share, and each institution had its powers specified. However, the behaviour of the political leaders showed that the agreement prevented the Lebanese authority from running in a systematic manner. We should ask some questions about this behaviour: Who has the real power in Lebanon: Is it the President, the Prime

Minister or the Speaker? In fact, looking at the period after the agreement was approved in the Lebanese Parliament reveals that the equation which emerged after the Taif agreement is the equation of opposite powers. The era which followed the Taif agreement carried the seeds of the disputes and the estrangement between the three presidents. In the period of the President of the Republic Elias Hrawi, the relationship between the three presidents were very tense, as in the era of President Emile Lahoud, as things had come between them to such an extent that they failed to meet and regulate the fundamental interests that facilitate the work of the state and its institutions.

However, the system of government, not in its essence, but in how it was applied, revealed the absence of stability and steadiness, and indicated the lack of commitment of Lebanese political groups that run the political system, and the lack of commitment to the power limits of the new institutions that were operating in the post-Taif period. In every stage, new indicators have emerged which show the preponderance of one official or another, or one leader over the rest of the leaders. To elaborate, officials who occupy high-ranked positions in Lebanon did not attain their offices on the basis of a national consensus, but rather, through their statuses as representatives and leaders of certain sects. Consequently, the success of a certain official is seen as a success of the community and the sect which he represents, and the decline of him is a decline for his community and sect. Therefore, it can be argued that representing the interests and demands of the Lebanese citizens is not a priority on those official's agenda since the latter does not look at his electors as a public opinion which has the power to ensure that rulers rule for the prosperity of their people. On the contrary, they look at them as submissive followers. Furthermore, communities within the Lebanese political system started to act on the basis that the share of each community and sect must be obtained and maintained whether peacefully or by force.

On the other hand, the process for strengthening the state and allowing it to enforce its sovereignty was hampered from within Lebanon and by external forces. We should examine how this occurred. As outlined above, the Taif agreement provided the right criteria to end the war, but at the same time, as Norton argues, it curiously also required that Lebanon surrender its sovereignty over some of its territory for a significant period of time (Norton 1991:466). The period that Norton outlines does not accord with the

details of the agreement. According to Taif, the Lebanese government was to confiscate the weapons of all the militias within six months. Some militias had handed in their weapons before the process started, and the government confiscated some others by force. Here, the Lebanese considered that who started to monopolise the use of force became the military forces of the Lebanese state, but a row of events occurred, most recently in 2008, to show that the militias that fought during the civil war still retained their arms, and only part was delivered to the state. As for the issue of the Syrian military presence, the Taif Agreement stipulated the withdrawal of Syrian military within no more than two years, but the Syrian army did not abide by the spirit of the agreement, and remained on Lebanese soil, intervening in every detail, until 2005. As for the issue of the Israeli occupation of part of Lebanese territory in the south, the Lebanese government did not adhere to what was stipulated in the text of the Agreement, but allowed the military forces of the Iran-backed Hezbollah to fight Israel, and thereby turn south Lebanon into a huge military barracks belonging to Hezbollah, with no trace of the legitimate Lebanese authorities.

In conclusion, the Lebanese state was able to regain some sense of stability as a result of the Taif agreement, but this was not harnessed to help stabilise Lebanon's sovereignty or to properly rebuild its democratic institutions. Political leaders did not act in unison after the agreement and did not follow the conditions it laid out for re-establishing the institutions of state on a firm foundation. In fact, what did emerge in Lebanon was a series of dysfunctional institutions that do not act in the public interest, but are rather rife with corruption and unnecessary extravagance. They do not favour competence and integrity, but rather reward favouritism and blind subordination to political leaders and not to the interests of the state.

## 4. Chapter Four: Lebanese Democracy and its Internal Hindrances

### 4.1 Introduction

In a speech at one of the first meetings of the United Nations, Charles Malik, the Lebanese philosopher and diplomat who played a vital role in shaping the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Klug 2008), characterised the history of Lebanon by saying:

*“The history of my country for centuries is precisely that of a small country struggling against all odds for the maintenance and strengthening of real freedom of thought and conscience. Innumerable persecuted minorities have found, throughout the ages, a most understanding haven in my country, so that the very basis of our existence is complete respect of differences of opinion and belief”* (Malik & Malik 2000:16).

Malik’s characterisation is almost the same as that made by Michel Chiha, the father of the Lebanese Constitution, when he argued that Lebanon is a country with traditions worth protecting from violence, and the coexistence of its peoples, even if the result of an agreed misunderstanding, should be the coexistence between free peoples where their freedom allows them to be the finest political group in the east. This freedom, according to Chiha, is a freedom that exists at the heart of the Lebanese entity and can be described as a freedom haven.

However, this freedom, which is expressed and described as a fundamental pillar supporting the democratic system in Lebanon and strengthening its foundation, was exposed to many domestic and foreign violations since the country’s adoption of its liberal constitution in 1926. This negatively affected the democratic system and hampered its development. Thus, the finest political group in the east that Chiha hoped the Lebanese would create, and the religious coexistence between the nineteen sects of Christians and Muslims which was hoped to serve as an inspiration for a pluralistic democratic region, both suffered a severe blow.

In Lebanon, there is a commonly held misconception in people's understanding of democracy. There, many of the public and some politicians understand freedom to be the same as democracy, and that when the level of freedoms declines; it means that democracy declines too. Of course, freedom is inherent to democracy and vice versa, but this correlation does not mean in any way that freedom is democracy or equal to democracy. In other words, describing and calling a regime a democracy needs to be investigated in a way that allows us to conclude whether the political system meets with the conditions needed and required by democracy, and, of course, these conditions are not met by freedom alone.

In the following, the researcher will try to review some of the internal barriers and hindrances that have impeded the development of an effective democratic system in Lebanon.

## **4.2 Internal Hindrances**

When it comes to internal hindrances, Lebanon falls short regarding most of the requirements for democracy. The country faces a considerable number of problems that hamper its internal and external sovereignty, not to mention the problems with its electoral system, in addition to some other problems which hamper and hinder the establishment of a strong functioning state. The aim of the next section, which discusses sectarianism, is to find out whether it is a barrier that represents an obstacle to the stability and development of the Lebanese political system, and thus to democracy.

### **4.2.1 Sectarianism**

It would be easy enough for anybody who looks at Lebanon's history to find out that sectarianism is deep-rooted and extensive in influence, and that the efforts made by many supporters of secularism over the years have not come to fruition and have showed that it is incredibly hard to overcome.

Indeed, there are two arguments in Lebanon over the issue of sectarianism. The first considers it necessary that sectarianism be abolished, since it does nothing for Lebanon and is damaging to the interests of both state and nation. It is an obstacle to achieving a functioning democracy and gives cause to further conflicts. The second considers sectarianism to be essential for democracy, since it is only the result of adherence to the right of holding a belief and allowing others to hold a contrary belief (which can be beneficial if it is not politicised) (Al-Khoury 200). Actually, the two points of view both hold some rights and wrongs. However, there are some questions to be raised in further discussing these two points of views. The first question that occurs is: how does sectarianism trouble the interests of both the nation and the state? The second question: is sectarianism a kind of legal and constitutional formula that can be eliminated through the amendment of the constitutional and legal provisions which legitimize it or it is rooted in society, culture and behaviour? The third question: in which sense does sectarianism form an essential part of democracy in that it represents no more than adherence to the right of citizens to be different while maintaining the privilege of others to hold contrary beliefs?

While Lebanese sectarianism is represented in legal and constitutional formulae, it is essentially based on the value systems of Lebanese society which not only allow the religious and political spheres to intermingle, but the religious sphere to dominate the political. This system reaches well beyond the constitutional level to deeply affect political parties, administrative bodies, the education system and the institutions of social welfare and health. Sectarianism also manifests itself in networks of financial structures and interests, as well as mechanisms whereby the services and resources of the state are redistributed, which treats citizens as customers, but customers with unequal rights and duties.

It can also be used as a kind of power to reap illegal profits and accumulate wealth, thus enabling the wealthy to use their wealth as a means for getting into politics and being politically powerful. Sectarianism then ingrains itself further and further into the social subconscious and becomes a latent dredge which appears in public only at the height of conflict. Therefore, this has turned Lebanon into a group of minorities battling with each other and rallying to achieve their rights. But why? Is this diversity the root of the problem? Or are there other reasons for this?

Actually, this problem has nothing to do with the diversity that Lebanon enjoys, but it has other reasons. In addition to the above mentioned, some of the religious and political authorities in the country built their own private links with the outside world, and specifically associated with foreign religious and political authorities, so that they could maintain their good livelihoods and have the power to bully other internal authorities. This led to and made each sect practice its own policies and build its own foreign relations and also invite, when needed, its overseas partners to Lebanon. Moreover, the sectarian Lebanese system, which is one of the oldest ruling systems in the Middle East, has become psychologically fixed in the lives of the Lebanese. They have mingled it with the concept of religious sectarianism and political and administrative sectarianism, so that they became lost between sectarian loyalty and national loyalty. This led to a situation where the citizen started to feel that the community that he belonged to represents the framework in which he feels his political presence, and thus he became a follower of his sect leader. Of course, this problem and its results are not the responsibility of the citizens of Lebanon, since they were not the causes of its emergence, but some political leaders, who in order to remain in power and maintain their gains, worked on the isolation of their communities. Otherwise, how can we explain, for example, the survival of the President of the House of Representatives (the Speaker) for more than twenty years in office without allowing anybody to compete or run against him? Furthermore, as discussed above, sectarianism has spread to other parts of Lebanese society. It was manifest in the courts, so that religious courts began regulating the personal statuses of personal groups. It became evident in a superfluous numbers of schools, welfare organisations, hospitals, clinics, charities, television and radio stations, reconstruction companies and even supermarkets and petrol stations. It even spread within the different sects, with different groups using their own places of worship to attract and influence followers. All this allowed ideological dissemination which fostered, and continues to foster, societal separatism, giving the individual communities a false sense of uniqueness. In this way sectarianism is not in the interests of the nation or state. It is an obstacle to a functioning democracy and fosters more conflict.

Conversely, in proper functioning democracies, the law ensures the protection of the individual, his rights and interests, by prohibiting all forms of discrimination and differentiation. In other words, the law, when dealing with governance, management



and administration, does so through a mechanism that respects the individual and his rights. As for Lebanon, the opposite happens because the sectarian system, made from the sectarian groups, is the dealing centre of the organization, management and governance, which forces the individual to seek his protection from his sectarian group, and this leads him (the individual) to believe that belonging to the sect and his own community is much more important, beneficial and valuable than belonging to the state. It stands as a barrier preventing the growth of the state and the development of its institutions, and thus reduces its effectiveness and services. Also, when sectarianism decays the body of the state and society in such a serious way, then it is considered as a violation of human rights, which usually calls for justice, equality and equal opportunities. In this sense, where sectarianism has spread everywhere, it prohibits democracy from playing its role as a safety valve for the stability of society. Also it encourages corruption, nepotism, expediency, careerism and demagoguery. In this sense, it troubles the interests of both the nation and the state and has thus become an obstacle to reaching a proper democracy.

On the other side, it is argued that sectarianism is no more than adherence to the right to be different while admitting the privilege of others to hold a contrary belief, essential for democracy (Al-Khoury 2006). Many scholars have shown that preserving the right to be different is important to many democracies. In this view, democracy is a social covenant between people who agree to recognise the rights of individuals to live according to their beliefs, as long as they recognise the right of others to do the same. The right to be different is therefore as important as a free press, free elections, an independent judiciary, and the separation of powers, transparency and the right to access of information. Sectarianism therefore favours and fosters democracy when viewed from this perspective. In other words, if sectarianism means diversity and demographic intermixing, freedom of worship and practicing religious rituals, then, undeniably, it is a healthy situation. Also, sectarianism might be looked at as healthy to the state and its political system if it is considered as participation of all for the good of the country. In other words, if applying the Fifty-Fifty principle between Christians and Muslims means an affirmation of equality and responsibility, and an embodiment of sharing, but with the condition of healthy representation, then it could be viewed as beneficiary. And

naturally, when we speak about healthy representation, it means that representation should be based on competence and not on favouritism.

Under these paradoxical realities, what is the most appropriate solution that does not make sectarianism an obstacle to the integrity of the State, political system and thus to democracy? Returning to the Taif Agreement, of which some aspects were discussed earlier, we can observe that this agreement discussed sectarianism and suggested solutions which do not affect the principle of equality between Muslims and Christians. Also, the Taif Agreement, in an advanced stage, mentioned abolishing sectarianism after establishing the National body of abolition of political sectarianism.

The Lebanese politicians who were present at Taif implicitly and explicitly promised to overcome sectarianism by reforming the political system. An agreement with forward-looking terms was therefore reached:

- 1- The abolition of political sectarianism was to be a national objective central to producing a united and stable state and political system. However, what emerged from the implementation of the Taif Agreement was not the abolition of sectarianism, as had been mentioned, but a political scene with a balance of power between confessions. However, Article 95 of the constitution adopted the terms that call for the abolition of sectarianism, which gave it strength and special legitimacy, but after more than twenty one years of amending the Constitution, officials have not moved a single step toward forming the required national body, which can be considered as laggard in the application of the Constitution without any explicit justification.
- 2- Electing the Chamber of Deputies on a national and not sectarian basis. After achieving this goal, the next step would then be the establishment of a Senate where all spiritual families are represented. Of course, these two terms which Taif called for were not implemented.
- 3- Strengthening state control over private schools and school textbooks which would lead to the strengthening and fostering of a sense of national belonging. Also, twenty one years after amending the constitution, this term was left in the drawer without being implemented, which led to the emergence of chaos in the education sector, so that each sect, party or religious group established its

private schools where its education program is in line with the vision of the party or the group, not the State.

- 4- Working to achieve a comprehensive social justice through financial, economical and social reform. However this term, with its utmost importance, was also left unimplemented. Through social justice, which means sponsoring all citizens in all parts of the country, the role of the State is fostered and ensured. Also, having social justice implemented means having the key to development and modernization and a starting point for reform on all levels. However, the State failing to apply this term has benefited the political parties and groups, as they have managed to take over the state's role, and have begun to provide services to citizens in places where they have gained influence, which facilitated the process of buying their loyalty and thus leading citizens away from national interests. The prominent role of militias and other non-state organisations, which hold much influence and are able to affect decision-making processes in Lebanon, are the next obstacle. Most exist simply to provide the services and perform the roles that the government fails to provide. Essentially, if the government manages to properly provide for its citizens, then they will no longer have needed any political party or militia or Leader to gain access to, for example: education and medical supplies. The state should be providing these services, which would eliminate the need for non-state actors. They will then lose authority allowing the government to reassert itself and perform its role as the sole authority. Such a pattern is beneficial for Lebanese authority and it will raise the profile of the secular state in providing positive services for its citizens.

These forward-looking terms, however, which either directly or indirectly lead to the abolition of sectarianism; still provide a framework for the modernisation of the state, since they provide the only path for Lebanon to move from the federal state of communities to a state of conscious citizenship. Clearly, as mentioned above, they reveal that the Taif agreement, to some extent, suggested effective solutions to overcome sectarianism and political sectarianism. However, the political leaders seem to have been content with bringing the war to an end, and have not moved on to building a modern democratic political system.

However, the reforms that Taif called for do not appear by themselves to be a sufficient solution to remove the obstacles to the democratic system, as they do not lead the system to divide the issue of religion from the exercise of political power. In addition to what was suggested, the civil law should be updated. A stronger division between secular and communal law needs to be made in dealing with issues such as marriage and inheritance, which are currently usually left to the religious customs and beliefs of one of the different sects involved. Such separation would be another means of strengthening the government while freeing it from a few more sectarian obligations.

For example, marriages can still be held according to the customs of sects, by the civil marriage certificates issued by the government should be recognised for legal purposes. This would also enable young couples to move away from old family traditions, contributing to secularism by reducing the role of clans in the younger generations. Furthermore, it would make citizens equal before the law and move towards a situation with no religious based representation, where the status as a citizen comes foremost. This would help create a state based on equal competence and justness, which is a fundamental pillar of democratic systems.

Earlier, a number of political Leaders tried to introduce some reforms regarding the civil marriage in Lebanon, in a move to reduce the rupture among Lebanese citizens, but they failed because of facing a lot of obstacles. When interviewed on 08/11/2008, Walid Jumblatt, the Druze Leader and the Head of the Progressive Socialist Party, pointed and referred clearly to this issue and the obstacles he and his political allies faced when trying to fix the optional civil marriage Law. He demonstrated:

*“We should one day abolish the sectarian system in Lebanon, and if you want to do that, you will face the obstacle of the clergy, most of them are Christian clergy and some of the Muslims also, because they have the privileges. You remember when we tried to fix up the non-compulsory civil marriage; the Sheikhs and the Bishops were against it. It is a way to forbid people to mix together” (Junblatt 2008).*

To sum up, sectarianism, as discussed above, reveals itself as an obvious source of disruption for the stability of the Lebanese political system. This aspect of the problem is also argued by Professor Tarek Mitri, the former Minister of Environment, then administrative reform and then Information. When interviewed on 5/01/2009, the former Minister argued that communal and sectarian loyalties are a “hindrance for the

spreading of a democratic culture” (Mitri 2009). Professor Mitri added that not only are communal loyalties a hindrance for the spreading of democratic culture, but also communal and sectarian power sharing which is “in theory stands in contradiction with the principle of political equality of all Lebanese” (Mitri 2009). However, some argue that implementing the reforms concerning the abolition of sectarianism and political sectarianism outlined in the Taif agreement is an impossible mission and task in the presence of illegal weapons and the absence of a strong government that is able to safeguard the rights of its citizens. In the next section, the armed Hezbollah, which is most organized armed party in Lebanon, and which is integrally linked to Iran, will be discussed. This will help to find out whether the previous argument is right, and whether these arms are an obstacle to democracy.

#### **4.2.2 The Armed Hezbollah**

The aim of this section is to briefly discuss the arms of Hezbollah. On one hand, this will provide a useful base for a better understanding of the entire role of the armed party which will be discussed deeply in the sixth chapter. On the other hand, it will find out whether the arms of Hezbollah represent a threat to domestic sovereignty, and thus, to democracy. It is, however, not possible to explore if the arms of Hezbollah represent a threat to sovereignty and democracy without discussing the relationship between sovereignty and democracy. In other words, it is necessary to discuss the chances for establishing democracy in cases of debatable domestic sovereignty, which is the case in Lebanon. But before that, a brief overview of Hezbollah’s arms will be undertaken, and we shall discuss how these arms prevent the government and its official security forces from carrying out the legitimate duties assigned to them.

Hezbollah, the Iranian backed militia, which defines its identity as an Islamic jihadi movement, and “whose emergence is based on an ideological, social, political and economic mixture in a special Lebanese, Arab and Islamic context” (Cobban 2006:13) started its military activity in Lebanon in the early eighties engaging in acts that “constitute terrorism in its more precise and generally understood sense” (Norton 2009:77). Augustus Richard Norton, who is the professor of international relations and

anthropology at Boston University, justifies the latter description by arguing that “by definition, any act of violence that it commits or seeks to commit is an act of terrorism, and so there are no gray areas of justifiable behavior in which terrorists may lurk. Whether for law enforcement officials, spies, or soldiers, the issue is assumed to be settled” (Norton 2009:75). He gives examples of clear instances of terrorism conducted by Hezbollah, including the 1985 skyjacking of TWA flight 847 en route from Athens to Rome, and the 1988 kidnapping of the unarmed UN observer Colonel Higgins of the U.S. Marines, who was tortured and murdered (Norton 2009). While Judith Palmer Harik, the American Professor of Political Science at the American University of Beirut, reports that it was in 1983, when acts of terrorism, apparently ordered by the Islamic republic of Iran, were implemented by local actors about whom very little was known (Harik 2005:IX). According to her, an example of this was when a suicide bomber drove an explosives-laden car into the American Embassy on 19 April 1983, killing 63 (Harik 2005:IX). Hezbollah, the Shiite fundamentalist organization backed by Iran and Syria, was accused by Washington of this act and many other acts (Harik 2005:X). Hezbollah’s military activity did not stop at this point, as its military leader Imad Mugniyah, who was killed in a car bombing in Damascus in 2008, was accused by the Kuwaiti Government of “hijacking a Kuwaiti passenger plane in 1988 that led to the killing of two Kuwaiti men whose bodies were dumped on the tarmac of Larnaca airport in Cyprus.”<sup>44</sup> These hijackings and acts exposed “the deep tension between Hezbollah and Amal leader Nabih Berri” (Norton 2009:43) which “exploded in 1988-89 with two militias fighting to win the Shi’i heartland in the south, as well as the teeming southern suburbs of Beirut, where fully half the Shi’i population resides” (Norton 2009:43). Augustus reports that Amal was badly defeated and Hezbollah’s attempts to roll back Amal influence succeeded in eroding Amal’s position (Norton 2009:44).

However, these battles and sporadic armed activities carried out by Hezbollah happened during the Lebanese civil war while the government was not in control; the state was divided against itself and rival militias were fighting each other throughout Lebanon. Also, they happened before the Taif Agreement, and thus before any agreement had been reached which required the disarmament of militias. In other words, Hezbollah,

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<sup>44</sup> NOW Lebanon, “*Kuwait names Mugniyah perpetrator of hijacking and urges national restraint*”, [online], available at: <<http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=31259#ixzz1P7CO6aUR>> [Accessed April 2011].

which “certainly served as a stalking horse for Iranian interests, especially in the 1980’s” (Norton 2009:44) was not just the only militia which took up arms, but was part of a whole, and therefore one of many which participated in violating sovereignty and being in rebellion against the state’s military forces. This means that Hezbollah’s rebellion was not a unilateral rebellion, as at that point there was, because of the civil war, a collective rebellion against the state and its sovereignty and a collective violation of the rule of law. However, after the Taif Agreement, the agreement which called all militias to surrender their illegal arms, Hezbollah retained its arms under the pretext of resisting Israel and repelling any possible attack on Lebanon. In this context, Norton argues:

*“The civil war came to a close in Lebanon by the early 1990s, when all the militias, except Hezbollah, agreed to disband in accordance with the 1989 Taif accord. Hezbollah, which signed on to the accord only after the Iranian government gave its blessing, justified the maintenance of its armed forces by calling them “Islamic resistance” groups, not militias, committed to ending Israelis occupation. The forces were said to be needed to defend the country against the Israel-sponsored SLA (South Lebanon Army)” (Norton 2009:83).*

Here, it becomes clear that Hezbollah accepted an agreement, which is the Taif agreement, but did not accept the requirements and implications of this agreement, such as those relating to the withdrawal of the militia’s arms. In addition to this, Hezbollah did not try to legitimize its weapons, i.e. put them under the aegis of the state and the legitimate Lebanese authorities, perhaps in an indication that those who ordered them to accept the Taif agreement, the Iranian authorities, did not allow Hezbollah to step towards the legalization of its weapons by letting the army and the state do the job of defending Lebanon and leading the resistance to Israel. This leads to the conclusion that these weapons have a third-party mission not only related to resistance to Israel and protecting Lebanon, but related to an agenda outside the Lebanese border. However, perhaps the most important aspect that should be considered is that there was no consensus reached on these weapons since it was not been agreed upon by a significant number of Lebanese citizens. Also, these arms did not receive any legal and constitutional legitimacy, and therefore are contrary to the law. Moreover, it should be noted that the militia that owns these weapons, Hezbollah, is not a legal party, as it did

not request for a license to operate as a political party, which means that dual offences are taking place: an illegal militia owning illegal arms.

Apart from the fact that Hezbollah is doing a job which is primarily a responsibility of the Lebanese state, the vast quantity of arms, in addition to the nature of the military actions required, forces Hezbollah to ensure the safety of these arms by establishing buffer zones which are forbidden to inspection by the State, as well as ensuring the protection of the militia military commanders and political leaders and also building trenches which are used to shelter its guerrillas. After the Taif agreement, Hezbollah's military activity significantly detracted from the prestige of the state and damaged its sovereignty over its territory.

Perhaps it is useful to make a summary of the most prominent military activities carried out by the party. Hezbollah went to war with Israel alone three times, with neither the permission of the Lebanese state nor any mandate from the people of Lebanon. These wars happened in 1993, 1996 and 2006. Moreover, in May 2008, Hezbollah occupied the city of Beirut by force of arms and surrounded the Grand Serail in downtown Beirut after the Lebanese government approved sovereign decisions to stop the private telephone network of Hezbollah. On that day, Hezbollah fighters only withdrew from Beirut's streets after forcing the Lebanese government to back down from its decisions. After the armed Hezbollah took over Beirut, the Secretary General of Hezbollah Hassan Nasrallah "called Hizbullah's 7 May 2008 military takeover of West Beirut "glorious day" for Resistance."<sup>45</sup> In August of the same year Hezbollah shot down a helicopter belonging to the Lebanese army and killed an officer with the rank of Major in it. Hezbollah sources described the downing of the helicopter by claiming that resistance fighters of Hezbollah, after spotting a military helicopter equipped with a camera filming in a sensitive area, shot a warning to send a strong message to the pilot to stay away, but not to shoot down the helicopter and kill those inside.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>[online], available at:<

<sup>46</sup>NOW Lebanon, "'Hezbollah' fighters fired at the army helicopter to warn not to kill",[online],available at: <



However, this leads us to believe that such military activity carried out by Hezbollah, in addition to threatening the authority of the state and preventing it from carrying out its role properly, also threatens Lebanese sovereignty at its heart by carrying out illegal activity on land governed by a present and active Lebanese state, regardless of whether it is fully effective or semi-effective. Perhaps it might be helpful to go through some definitions of sovereignty which will help us to strengthen the above point of view.

Alain de Benoist, the French academic, philosopher and the head of the French think tank GRECE, gives sovereignty a dual definition. He considers the first definition to apply to supreme public power, which has the right and, normally, the ability to impose its decisions in the last instance. The second applies to the holder of legitimate power who is seen to be in authority. The first definition is used in discussions of a nation's sovereignty, referring particularly to a state of independence, meaning the freedom of a collective body to act. The second definition applies to discussions of popular sovereignty, and this is linked to power and legitimacy (De Benoist).

Sir Francis Harry Hinsley, the late English historian and cryptanalyst, demonstrates the classic definition of sovereignty by identifying it as "the idea that there is a final and absolute political authority in the political community [. . .] and no final and absolute authority exists elsewhere" (Hinsley 1986:26). This idea of final authority that Hinsley refers to is, according to Oisín Tansey, often further associated with ideas of both internal and external sovereignty. OISÍN argues that internal sovereignty, which we are mainly concerned with here, describes the state's domestic authority, and suggests that there is no higher authority than the state at the domestic level. External authority, on the other hand, describes relations on the international scene and the absence there of any higher authority than the sovereign state, which requires that the state be independent from outside intervention (Tansey 2010).

Regarding domestic sovereignty, Tansey considers it to describe the capacity of the state to provide its own political system and structures. He suggests that this is much more important than international recognition for the prospects for democratic rule, or than international legal sovereignty, since democracy requires that the state is able to assert its own jurisdiction and authority on the domestic scene (Tansey 2010).

Nevertheless, some scholars argue that there is not a distinctly and sharply defined and outlined relationship between sovereignty and democracy, since sovereignty is a complex concept that is made up of several important, distinct, and yet constituent elements. Others, however, argue that the state's sovereignty is of considerable importance here, and should be seen as a necessary prerequisite for democratic rule. Among those who discuss the latter are the Spanish sociologist and political scientist Juan José Linz and the comparative political scientist and Professor of Government Alfred C. Stepan, who demonstrates that democracy requires sovereignty and that official statehood is a prerequisite to democracy (Tansey 2010).

Stepan and Linz argue that, as democracy is a form of governance for a modern state, no democracy is possible without a state. They assert that these arguments hold true both empirically and theoretically (Linz & Stepan 1996:17). As an illustration, they analyse some basic definitions of the state, starting with Max Weber, who discusses the key features of the state in modern societies in the following terms:

*“The primary formal characteristics of the modern state are as follows: it possesses an administrative and legal order subject to change by legislation, to which the organized corporate activity of the administrative staff, which is also regulated by legislation, is oriented. This system of order claims binding authority, not only over the members of the state, the citizens, most of whom have obtained membership by birth, but also to a very large extent, over all action taking place in the area of its jurisdiction. It is thus a compulsory association with a territorial basis. Furthermore, today the use of force is regarded as legitimate only so far as it is either permitted by the state or prescribed by it ... The claim of the modern state to monopolize the use of force is as essential to it as its character to compulsory jurisdiction and of continuous organization”* (Weber 1964:156 cited in Linz & Stepan 1996:17).

According to Linz and Stepan, Charles Tilly provides a more recent formulation, which also covers the state's ability to control the population in its territory (Linz & Stepan 1996:17). He argues that “An organization which controls the population occupying a definite territory is a state in so far as (1) it is differentiated from other organizations operating in the same territory; (2) it is autonomous [and] (3) its divisions are formally coordinated with one another” (Tilly 1975: 70 cited in Linz & Stepan 1996:17).

These theories and arguments lead Linz and Stepan to suggest that, without an organisation conforming to these state-like characteristics in a particular territory, a government, whether democratically elected or not, would not be able to enforce its monopoly on the legitimate use of force in the territory, nor would it be able to collect taxes or run a judicial system (Linz & Stepan 1996:18). In other words, their argument relies on the idea that a democracy requires the features of a modern sovereign state, including an administration capable of raising taxes, providing public services according to the needs of the electorate and monopolise the legitimate use of force (Tansey 2010).

Regarding this, Tansey suggests that domestic sovereignty is important to democracy in that it includes the state's capability, and willingness, to maintain the rule of law and uphold political rights throughout its territory (Tansey 2010). Guillermo O'Donnell, the Argentine political scientist, demonstrates that the idea of domestic sovereignty is similar to the idea of state capacity, which has been specified in comparative political literature as an essential prerequisite for democratic rule (O'Donnell 1999 cited in Tansey 2010). Similarly, Francisco E. Gonzalez and Desmond King put forward that the state's authority and reach affect how effectively democratic freedoms and rights can be maintained throughout its territory (Gonzalez & King 2004 cited in Tansey 2010).

In summary, the above analysis demonstrates that achieving democracy and the presence of a sovereign state are interlinked. In other words, a sovereign state is required for a democracy, and the challenges of providing a democracy cannot be overcome "unless the territorial entity is recognized as a sovereign state" (Linz & Stepan 1996 cited in Tansey 2010). This argument relies on the idea that a democracy as a type of political governance needs the features of a modern sovereign state, including an administration capable of raising taxes, providing public services according to the needs of the electorate, and monopolising the legitimate use of force (Tansey 2010). Some of these conditions do not exist in Lebanon, which has become clear in the discussion at the beginning of this section, which if we refer back to we will find that the power of Hezbollah and its military on the ground are incompatible with the conditions relating to the right of the state to maintain a monopoly on the legitimate use of force, as the government and its military forces are banned and prohibited from exercising their duties in preserving security and public order in a large part of the

Lebanese territory. This is added to the fact that the state cannot collect taxes from people who live in areas controlled by Hezbollah, as this party, as people are convinced, holds more power than the state, and therefore cannot be pursued or prosecuted in any way by the state. These issues are related to domestic sovereignty and are revealed most clearly in the limitations on the government's authority over its territory.

### **4.2.3 Palestinians in Lebanon: Arms and Refugees**

#### **4.2.3.1 Arms: The Violation of Lebanese Sovereignty**

Following the declaration of the State of Israel in May 1948, a few tens of thousands of Palestinians fled to neighbouring states to escape the armed conflicts or were compulsorily ousted from their homes by the Israeli Defence Force (Kapitan 2004). Initially, 100,000 Palestinians, mainly from Galilee and the coastal areas, fled to Lebanon (Suleiman 2006).

In 1949, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency was founded by the United Nations with the aim of providing for the basic needs of the Palestinian Refugees. Its goal was to support the Palestinians until they were able to return home. While the founding of Israel by the UN provided a Jewish 'homeland' for victimized Jews in Europe, it caused the dispersal of the Palestinian population away from their homeland and resulted in what Robin Cohen calls 'Victim Diaspora' (Cohen 1977: 31,51 cited in Suleiman 2006). This 'Victim Diaspora' that Cohen spoke of negatively affected Lebanon, as it became a strain on Lebanese political life, and was later a major cause in triggering the civil war of 1975.

However, the Palestinians who fled to Lebanon did not act on the basis of being guests that have a duty of respecting the privacy of Lebanon and its political, social and religious complex. Instead, among other things, they dreamt of liberating Palestine through the use of Lebanese territory as a starting point for their military operations. The "Fatah" movement began operating in Lebanon in 1965, and actively started

seeking to establish its infrastructure, attract supporters and set up the movement of "Fatah support". In the late sixties the premature expansion has come, as well as the time to modify the nature of the Palestinian political and military existence in Lebanon. Hence it was decided to hold a big demonstration in Beirut and for this purpose a "Committee for supporting Fatah" was formed, which had the task of planning the demonstration. The demonstration took place on April 23 1969 and led to unrest in Beirut, and violent confrontations between demonstrators and the internal security forces. The Prime Minister at that time, Rashid Karami, resigned because of the demonstration which resulted in disturbances and the loss of lives. This resignation sank the country into a ministerial crisis lasting as long as seven months. Of course, this laxity and chaos, as well as the ambitions and dreams of the Palestinians to liberate Palestine from the land of Lebanon, were due to the inability and weakness of the state. Therefore, every problem that occurred before, during and after the demonstration, followed by the expansion of the Palestinians, was inevitably the result of the failure of the state, and the state bears responsibility.

Skirmishes continued in Lebanon, and Palestinians continued to use Lebanese territory as a platform for their military activities. This kept happening because the armed Palestinian militias had large public support in Lebanon, guaranteed under left-wing, nationalist and communist parties. However, this led to Palestinian armed factions taking control of all the Palestinian refugee camps, which became a refuge for fugitives from justice and the gateway to the riots and attacks on the army and security forces. These actions and others were the building blocks which forced the Lebanese state to sign an agreement which detracted from the sovereignty of Lebanon. In November 1969, President Charles Helou sent the then Prime Minister, Rashid Karami, to discussions with Arafat, and under the supervision of the Egyptian Defence Minister Mohammed Fawzi Lebanon signed the "Cairo Agreement" with the PLO. Harik reports that "the newly founded PLO headed by Yasser Arafat had been given the green light to conduct these [military] operations from Lebanese soil" (Harik 2005: 34). In addition, that the Lebanese army had been prevented from entering the Palestinian refugee camps.

This agreement, if examined closely, requires the concession of Lebanon's sovereignty in some areas on the southern border to the Palestinian resistance, and gives freedom of

movement for "guerrilla action" against Israel. Judith Palmer Harik reports that it was impossible for the Lebanese government to deny the fighters access without both exacerbating the already large Muslim-Christian divide in the country and damaging relations with other Arab states(Harik 2005: 34). She suggests that Assad's Syria was in favour of the PLO being in South Lebanon and applying pressure on the Israelis. However, it was not long before Israel decided to respond to the "Cairo Agreement" by unilaterally declaring the abandonment of the "Armistice Agreement" of 1949, which was a formula setting out the relationship between Lebanon and Israel. In other words, the "Cairo Agreement" of 1969, which was a pretext that Israel used to topple the Armistice Agreement, has left Lebanon exposed to Israeli attacks and Israeli incursions and open occupations.

The resistance movement in Palestine, which was a direct challenge to the power held by Lebanon's elites, was also a challenge to the lives of the Lebanese citizens. With the growing strength of armed Palestinian groups in West Beirut and the south, and their direct control over the daily lives of some of the Lebanese in the south, restlessness began to prevail in their hearts. They rejected the extensive powers which the Palestinian armed factions gave themselves or which were granted to them by the Cairo Agreement. For their part, the Israelis looked to solve their problem with the PLO by turning to the Christians and Shiites living in the south. These people had chosen to remain rather than flee north to join the forces forming there, but they felt a great deal of resentment towards the Palestinian presence (Harik 2005:34). In 1978, Israel decided to invade Lebanon in an attempt to drive Palestinian guerrilla groups, especially the Palestine Liberation Organization, away from the border with Israel, and to strengthen Israel's then ally, the South Lebanon Army.

In response to the invasion, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolutions 425 and 426 calling for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon. A separate UN force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was formed to enforce this mandate, and restore peace and sovereignty to Lebanon. UNIFIL forces arrived in Lebanon on 23 March 1978, setting up headquarters in Naqoura. Israeli forces withdrew later in 1978, handing over positions inside Lebanon to their allied militia, the South Lebanon Army. Again, in 1982, Israel launched a full-scale invasion of Lebanon to stop attacks by Palestinian

guerrillas. However, as Israel moved to invade, something close to a ceasefire was taking shape along Lebanon's border. Israel nevertheless continued with the invasion. It claimed it was a justifiable way to put an end to terrorism there, crush the enduring resistance from Syria and the PLO, and impose a unilateral Pax Israeli on the region (Harik 2005:35). The 'peace for Galilee' operation, directed by Defence Minister Ariel Sharon, saw Israeli forces move into Beirut with the intention of crushing the Palestinians and their Muslim-leftist allies and reaching an agreement with Israel's Christian allies, which would result in an Israeli-Lebanese peace treaty (Harik 2005:35). The Israeli invasion of 1982 forced the PLO to leave Lebanon and transfer its military to Tunisia.

Of course, the Lebanese and Palestinian crisis did not end with the PLO's withdrawal from Lebanon, nor did it end the Lebanese civil war of 1975, which the PLO was instrumental in triggering. Palestinian refugees remained in Lebanon, and Palestinian refugee camps remained full of illegal weapons, while remaining 'off-limits' to the Lebanese state, i.e. its security forces. Until this moment the state is still banned from entering and enforcing laws in these areas, noting that the Taif Accord called for the withdrawal of armed militia, as well as the decisions of the national dialogue in 2006. In other words, these camps, which are located in Lebanese territory, remain outside the sovereignty of Lebanon, and the Palestinian arms remain outside the circle of Lebanese legitimacy, as the Palestinians refused and still extraditing the arms, in addition to the fact of state's inability to impose by force on the Palestinians to surrender these illegal weapons, due to internal and external factors.

However, before moving forward to talk about the Palestinian refugees and their impact on Lebanese democracy, we must first pause for an overview of the historical progress, and to try to understand the effects of the Palestinian weapons on Lebanese sovereignty, Lebanon's political system and consequently on Lebanese democracy.

We should draw attention to a number of issues relating to the Cairo agreement and the PLO's military activities and those of other Palestinian militias. The "Armistice Agreement" was abandoned by Israel on the pretext of the Cairo Agreement. This cannot be seen as an internal Lebanese measure intended to avoid or contain internal crises. If examined closely, we find that it was used to announce the distribution of sovereignty between the PLO and the Lebanese state over Lebanese territory. In

addition to that, the Cairo Agreement represented a change not only in Lebanon but at the level of the position of Lebanon in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and also in terms of its relationship with international resolutions, since the agreement forced Lebanon to cede its sovereignty over its territory due to external pressure. Therefore, Lebanese sovereignty was no longer determined by a sovereign Lebanese decision, but a decision imposed from outside the country.

Some might claim that the Cairo Agreement was cancelled, and therefore that it is useless to debate its effects. This claim, or the debate, from our point of view, is false. The Cairo Agreement formed the beginning of the breach of sovereignty, or the starting point of waiving it in favour of foreign forces and armed militias. Moreover, the Cairo Agreement, with our recognition that it was in fact rescinded, has effects still visible on the ground, in the sense that the Palestinian weapons still exist in the camps and that training camps still exist on the border with Syria which provide them political coverage and protection. Additionally, the leaders of the Palestinian factions still refuse disarmament of Palestinian weapons outside and inside the camps, because these weapons, they argue, are not linked to internal Lebanese issues but to the Arab-Israeli conflict, which is still standing.<sup>47</sup>

Of course, the breach of sovereignty, which resulted from the Cairo Agreement, was no more than the first episode in a series of breaches of Lebanese sovereignty. The Palestinian weapons held by the Palestinian factions can be placed in the same category as the arms of Hezbollah that we mentioned in the previous section, which also constitutes a loss and violation of Lebanese sovereignty. The consequences of Hezbollah's weapons are the same as those of the Palestinian weapons in Lebanon and, therefore, the rift caused by this massive armament in the body of the Lebanese political system and the Lebanese democracy is the same as that caused by Hezbollah.

To sum up, the failure of the state to exercise its sovereignty, or continuing willingly or forcibly to waive, cut or distributes its domestic and external sovereignty, represents a

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<sup>47</sup> NOW LEBANON, "*Abu Musa: We reject the disarmament of weapons outside the camps*", [online], available at: <<http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=139053>>, {Accessed March 2011}



setback and a failure in the ability of the state to administrate its affairs, and therefore, represents an obstacle to the development and maintenance of the political system. Moreover, and as discussed in the previous section, democracy and sovereign statehood are interconnected, and sovereignty is a prerequisite for democracy, that is a central state administration capable of collecting taxes, providing public services in response to the needs of the electorate, and maintaining a monopoly on the legitimate use of force.

#### **4.2.3.2 The Refugees: Human Rights Violated**

As mentioned above, following the declaration of the State of Israel in May 1948, a few tens of thousands of Palestinians fled into the neighbouring states, including Lebanon. However, the Palestinians who migrated to Lebanon remained displaced since their arrival without any alteration or improvement of their situation. The fortunes of the c. 4 million UN-registered Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora – in Syria, Jordan and the Israeli-controlled areas – has not been great, but their treatment in Lebanon has been particularly harsh<sup>48</sup>, as they are treated as if “refugees at one instance, a special category of residents, on the other hand, and often, foreigners, and at best, Arab residents, in moments of rising national feelings, but always and forever, outlaws” (Mihri 1998 cited in Baraka 2008).

The debate in this section does not address the political problem of the Palestinians in Lebanon, but it concentrates purely on the humanitarian issue and sphere. This is because for any democratic system to be functioning properly it must take into consideration the aspect of guaranteeing the right for humans to live in dignity and without any coercion, oppression or persecution. Here, when we speak about humans and their rights, we do not distinguish or differentiate between whether this human is an authentic first class citizen or a refugee, as humans in general, regardless of their race, identity, state of law, colour or social class, are guaranteed by law the right to live in dignity, have a proper education, express their thoughts and work within their fields of expertise, etc. In this context, Robert Dahl argues:

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<sup>48</sup> The Economist, “A history of the hapless”, [online], available at: <  
[http://www.economist.com/node/9265914?story\\_id=E1\\_JNGVJTQ](http://www.economist.com/node/9265914?story_id=E1_JNGVJTQ)>, [Accessed April 2011]

*“For one thing, extensive political rights and liberties are integral to democracy: they are necessary to the functioning of the institutions that distinguishes democracy from other kinds of political orders. The rights and liberties are therefore an element in what we often mean today by democracy or the democratic process or a democratic country”* (Dhal 1999:166).

Dahl’s above argument supports the point of view we have raised, which argue that the standards adopted in the classification of the state and its democratic political system depend on how the citizen is treated in the land within the jurisdiction of the rule of that system. In other words, any injustice, discrimination and mistreatment those citizens suffer, in general, including the displaced and migrants, of course, leads to the full absence of democracy, and it is therefore not valid in any way to describe any political system that does not respect human rights as a democracy.

The 1951 convention relating the status of refugees provides in its Article 1 a general definition of the term "refugee". The term applies to any person who:

*“as a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling, to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it”.*<sup>49</sup>

Furthermore, the minimum standards for treating refugees and their basic rights were set out by the convention. It also gave them a juridical status and contained clauses on their rights to gainful employment and welfare, their right to transfer their assets to their new country, as well as addressing the issue of travel documents and identity papers, and the applicability of fiscal charges.<sup>50</sup> In addition to guaranteeing the refugee the right of self-employment, liberal professions, access to public education, freedom of movement

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<sup>49</sup> United Nations Human Rights, “Fact Sheet No.20, Human Rights and Refugees”, [online], available at: <[www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FactSheet20en.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FactSheet20en.pdf)>, [Accessed April 30 2011]

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

including the right to travel outside the country, the convention requires that its provisions are applied without discrimination as to race, religion or country of origin and also calls for the protection of the refugee which must be seen in the broader context of the protection of human rights.<sup>51</sup> The above gives us an overview of the rights of refugees in any country that hosts them. These rights, if analysed closely, almost do not differ in substance from the rights given to indigenous citizens. In all cases, it gives the refugee the natural rights to live a decent and non-discriminatory life.

Even though the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon do not fall under the convention of 1951, but rather under the UNRWA's area of operations, it is palpable that they do not enjoy the minimum rights according to which they can live without humiliation or insult<sup>52</sup>. They are banned from access to basic rights like work, freedom of movement, travel, medical care and more. In other words, they are "deprived of almost all civil rights and subjected to various forms of marginalization -- spatial, institutional and economic -- and this marginalization is often linked to exclusion and violence" (Suleiman 2006). Palestinians are treated as a special category of foreigners in Lebanese law, where they are denied the basic rights granted to Lebanese nationals while also not being guaranteed the rights laid out for refugees in international agreements. Said observes that "the distinction between International Law norms for refugees and those stipulated in Lebanese law is striking. There is no provision granting any sort of preferred status to foreigners who have resided in Lebanon for more than three years...Lebanese Law does not afford a separate legal status to them or even define the term "refugee"" (Wadi'a 2001 cited in Suleiman 2006). In this context, it is argued that it is mistaken to consider that enhancing the Palestinians civil rights will somehow impinge on their rights as refugees. Like everyone, citizens and non-citizens alike, Palestinians have basic human rights; they have both rights as both refugees and as human beings, and they are able to enjoy both at the same time. However, the Taif Agreement of 1989, which constitutes a ban against the naturalization of Palestinians and the Palestinian militia groups, leads, intentionally or unintentionally, to a deviation from the path in the proper treatment of the Palestinians. The Lebanese state, which is

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Palestinians falling under the UNRWA's area of operation and residing elsewhere like Jordan, are granted their basic and fundamental rights i.e. work, travel, education etc.

not interested in the resettlement of Palestinians in Lebanon, forgets that the Palestinians are people who must be dealt with humanely and properly until a just solution is found to their cause and thus they are able to return to their homeland.

Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are subject to discrimination when it comes to the exercise of their right to work, as they are banned from exercising quite a large number of jobs. Lebanese born Palestinians registered as refugees were prevented from working in c. 40-45 jobs by ministerial decision no. 621/1 of the 1964 law (Wadi'a 2001 cited in Suleiman 2006). This was changed by ministerial decree 67/1, but the amendments still left Palestinians unable to work in syndicated jobs or some professions of the private sector which prefer to employ nationals. In all this includes about 50 fifty private sector jobs, trades and professions: both manual and clerical jobs in administration and banking, laboratories and pharmacies, electronics, mechanics and maintenance, teaching, concierge, guard dyer, cook, butler and hairdresser, as well as other independent professions in the private sector such as trade business (all categories), engineering (all categories), patisserie, printing and publishing and car maintenance (Suleiman 2006). Thus in practice Palestinians are still unable to work in the most important jobs (Hoda 2008). Since they are excluded from the labour market, refugee households, and particularly young refugee men, are in a unique position compared to refugees in other parts of the diaspora (Ibid).

The Lebanese Law which violates Lebanon's obligations under Article 5 of the International

Covenant on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) prevents Palestinians from acquiring or inheriting property, or registering real estate which they had bought or were buying in instalments (Suleiman 2006). A report of Amnesty International describes the discrimination against Palestinians with regard to their rights to own property. In combination with the poor conditions of the refugee camps, this “creates a situation whereby Palestinian refugees are discriminated against in their enjoyment of the right to adequate housing”, which violates Article 11(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Suleiman 2006).

Palestinian refugees that are not allowed to have access to Lebanese government hospitals or other related health services (Suleiman 2006) are also forbidden the right to travel and the right of freedom of movement. The three different categories of Palestinian refugees mentioned above are distinguished by the different documents they are issued: (a) permanent residency cards and a renewable travel document valid for five years are issued to refugees who are registered with both UNRWA and DAPR; (b) those registered with the latter, but not the former, are issued the same residency card but a different travel document (*Laissez Passer*) valid for one year and renewable three times; (c) those registered with neither are issued no document and are designated as Non-ID refugees (Suleiman 2006).

In conclusion, it is clear that most of the basic rights of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are violated and wasted, and that they live in a state of repression. Additionally, Palestinians who live in completely closed camps, surrounded by troops belonging to the Lebanese army and lacking the minimum of services and infrastructure, are subject to the most types of racial discrimination, both from the state and the Lebanese citizens. It is argued that when democracies exist and when democratic systems are functioning properly, “it is generally expected that the authority’s willingness and capacity to violate human rights would be diminished” (Davenport & Armstrong 2004). However, in Lebanon, it does not happen this way, as is demonstrated in the above discussion which shows that Lebanon represses and violates the human rights of the Palestinians, while “theorists, policy makers, NGOs, revolutionaries and everyday citizens have long heralded political democracy as “a,” and perhaps even “the,” resolution to the problem of state repression” (Davenport & Armstrong 2004).

#### **4.2.4 Elections and Electoral Laws in Lebanon: The Downward Path**

Elections at all different levels are thought of as an essential cornerstone of democracy as well as one of democracy’s most important institutions. The Austrian-American economist and political scientist, Joseph Schumpeter, when defining democracy, highlights the existence of competitive elections. He argues that democracy “means only that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to

rule them” (Schumpeter 1942: 284-285). Schumpeter’s definition shows the importance of elections in promoting democratic life and fostering any democratic system, but this does not necessarily mean that all elections will lead to the same outcome. For example, if a parliamentary election takes place, but is affected by fraud and bribery, the results will not lead to the strengthening of democracy; on the contrary, it will lead to the death of democracy.

However, the slogans of free and fair elections are not a new experience for the citizens of Lebanon. As in all elections they have experienced previously, such slogans manipulate the scene. In reality, these slogans do not exist, as elections are almost controlled, manipulated or, at best, are not genuinely competitive. In other words, in the context of democratic transition, free and fair elections are often the first institution of democratic governance that the public should experience, but this experience seems, to some extent, elusive in Lebanon, as the obstacles to having free and fair elections are enormous, beginning with foreign intervention and the influence of armed militias, and also including bribery and unrepresentative electoral laws.

The influence of some armed militias inside Lebanon has often and still continues to intersect with the interests of some regional powers. Where interest coincided, these bodies used to get together in order to resolve the results of the parliamentary and presidential elections. Sometimes foreign interventions, and sometimes the narrow political calculations of some leaders associated with overseas powers, played an essential role in impeding access to an electoral law which represents the will of the Lebanese citizens, and thus impeded free and fair elections. For example, Syria, after the Taif Agreement, managed to play an important role in shaping the course of the electoral process, beginning with the electoral law and ending with the electoral process itself. So, the Taif Agreement did not succeed in stopping Syria from interfering, as the agreement which stipulated the withdrawal of Syrian troops stationed in Lebanon by 1992 could not manage to have the pullout enforced. On the contrary, Safa argues that Lebanese laws, elections and key appointments were overseen and manipulated by Syrian intelligence officer for 15 years after the war ended in order to protect Syria’s interests (Safa 2010).

It was stipulated by the 1989 Taif Agreement that elections to the Parliament should be organised around the *muhafazat*, the six large administrative districts covering Lebanon:

North Lebanon, Beirut, Mount Lebanon, Beqaa, Nabatiyya and South Lebanon. These large electoral districts were created so that candidates were required to appeal to a broad multi-sectarian constituency, which should help to foster and preserve national unity and discourage sectarian extremism. However, before the 1992 parliamentary elections, Syrian officials had concerns that some of their important allies might fail to win support amongst a broader base and therefore lose the election.<sup>53</sup> Here, for the sake of safeguarding the interests of its allies, Syria intervened in re-shaping the electoral law in a way to ensure successful elections for its allies.<sup>54</sup> In 1996, elections in Mount Lebanon were carried out in the same way as in 1992, in violation of the Taif Accord.<sup>55</sup> The electoral districts were changed entirely for the 2000 elections. A meeting was held in November and December of 1999 between General Ghazi Kanaan, the head of Syrian military intelligence in Lebanon who later committed suicide in Syria, Bashar Assad and Salim al-Hoss, the Prime Minister of Lebanon, and other pro-Syrian politicians. The purpose was to finalise the details of a new electoral law, which saw the *muhafazat* divided into a total of 14 electoral districts.<sup>56</sup> Once again, the House of Representatives approved an electoral law which was commensurate with Syria and its interests, and also the interests of its allies in Lebanon.

Syria's interference was not limited to shaping electoral laws, but extended to manipulating electoral lists and determining who can vote and who cannot. This was an important means whereby Syria could manipulate the electoral process. Some political elites in Lebanon have little else in common other than their obedience to Damascus. Syrian officials want to bridge these differences, whether they are political, sectarian or ideological, amongst their allies, which could be exploited by their opponents, and so they put pressure on their Lebanese protégés to run joint electoral lists, which are only composed with the involvement of Damascus.<sup>57</sup> With regards to the manipulation of those eligible to vote, after the Taif Agreement some parliamentary elections were

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<sup>53</sup> The Middle East Forum, a Philadelphia based think tank, [online], available at :<  
<http://www.counterpunch.org/makdisi06172009.html>>, [Accessed March 2011]

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

influenced by attempts to both disenfranchise those who might vote against Syrian interests, or to extend citizenship to those who could be easily influenced to vote as required. Lebanese citizens abroad, including those with valid passports who owned property in Lebanon and returned regularly, were not allowed to vote by absentee ballot. This was not a surprising decision. It was not likely that the hundreds of thousands of Lebanese who fled Beirut during the 1989-90 siege by Syrian forces would vote for candidates approved by Damascus.<sup>58</sup>

However, the external interference in Lebanon's parliamentary election does not include Syria alone, but also other countries such as Iran and the United States of America. Lebanon's June national election of 2009, according to a Lebanese academic, was a box office success. It had: "shady politicians, foreign intrigue, bribes, meddling religious figures, beautiful women, sectarian allegations, recently exposed spy rings, fundamentalists collaborating with capitalists, the poor and oppressed voting for the rich and privileged" (Makdisi 2009) . Because elections have seen all these events, they have also seen an unprecedented foreign interference. The Iranian President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, said a week prior to the Lebanese 2009 elections that "the outcomes of the Lebanese elections will change the features of the region, hinting to a stronger Syrian-Iranian influence over Saudi-Egyptian influence".<sup>59</sup> The US has also been accused of interference, particularly after visits by both Joe Biden and Hillary Clinton where it is made clear that the US would not be pleased if the March 8<sup>th</sup> Alliance, a broad coalition of Islamist, Maronite, leftist, nationalist, and pan-Arabist parties, was most successful in the forthcoming elections (Zunes 2009).

The Lebanese elections, in addition to suffering from foreign interference, also suffer from the existence of illegal weapons, which have an impact on the attitudes of voters and candidates. In areas where Hezbollah exists, there is an absence of real competition among candidates, since you can only find a few candidates who dare to stand for election, and if they do, they will not be able to get the freedom of movement and meet people because of Hezbollah's control of villages, towns and cities where they are present. As for voters, they are afraid of voting against Hezbollah, as they feel that there

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Lebanese opposition claim election victory, while majority claim staying in power: , [online], available: <<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90777/90854/6672903.html>>,[Accessed April 2011]



is nothing that lets them sense a real and immediate return of the power of the state that would protect them and their interests, jobs and rights. Therefore, they prefer to vote for Hezbollah, as voting for Hezbollah will not put their interests at risk. Moreover, Hezbollah, due to its military power, managed to prevent the parliamentary majority from ruling following the results of two consecutive elections in 2005 and 2009. In other words, if elections are meant to help determine which political party assumes power, then in Lebanon this definition does not apply. Hezbollah's weapons have allowed it to impose its authority and prestige in spite of what was produced by the ballot boxes and, therefore, prevented the parliamentary majority from rule effectively.

In addition, before each parliamentary election, the bribery market flourishes in Lebanon. For example, in 2009, the parliamentary elections shaped up to be "among the most expensive ever held anywhere, with hundreds of millions of dollars streaming into this small country from around the world" (Worth 2009). Lebanon has long been seen as a battleground for regional influence between Saudi Arabia, Iran and other countries in the region and the world, and these "arm their allies with campaign money in place of weapons" (Worth 2009). The 2009 election was "widely seen as the freest and most competitive to be held here in decades, with a record number of candidates taking part. But it may also be the most corrupt" (Worth 2009). Regarding this, Transparency-Lebanon reported in a press release published the day following the elections of 2009, "that several candidates gave money to some voters in exchange for their vote: a vote is worth 800 dollars in Zahle (Bekaa province), between 60 and 100 dollars in Saida (south) and can reach 3000 dollars in Zghorta (north)."<sup>60</sup>

In addition to the above discussion, Lebanon suffers from several electoral problems:

1. The absence of an individual commissions (independent of the Ministry of Interior) to oversee elections.
2. The lack of proportional representation.
3. Voting age (currently 21).

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<sup>60</sup> Corruption made in Lebanon , France24 , [online], available at:<<http://observers.france24.com/content/20090612-scene-corruption-made-lebanon-michel-murr-akary>>

4. A strict law that controls the election spending money.
5. A strict law that controls the output of party propaganda on TV and radio stations.

To sum up, however, as noted and discussed in an earlier chapter, elections, as a key precondition for accessing democracy, sometimes become a key ingredient for the encryption of the truth and, therefore, are no longer in themselves sufficient evidence of a true and efficient democracy. In Lebanon, based on the above discussion, elections do not seem to be a source of promoting democratic life and fostering the so-called democratic system. Moreover, for democracy to be functioning properly, competitive elections should take place. In addition, if democracy “means only that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to rule them” (Schumpeter 1942:284-285), Lebanon’s democracy is some distance from this definition, as the people do not play a key role in accepting or refusing candidates, due to the influences they are exposed to. In other words, if a parliamentary election takes place, and for example is overwhelmed by fraud and bribery, the results will not lead to the strengthening of democracy; on the contrary, they will lead to the death of democracy.

## **5. Chapter Five : Lebanese Democracy and the External Hegemony**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Discussions of sovereignty always associate the idea with the emergence of the modern nation state in Europe after the treaty of Westphalia of 1648, which ended the religious Thirty Years War. This treaty recognised the principle of nation-state sovereignty as a supreme and absolute authority of the state over its territory. In other words, it is the state's right to function and exercise its power within the national territory without any interference from any other country. Thus, Westphalian sovereignty shaped the concept of non-intervention in the affairs of other states, meaning that the internal power structure of a state should be autonomous and free from external interference and controlled by those within that state. Put simply, it refers to the absence of powerful external influences and the autonomy of internal power structures (Krasner 2001:2).

In spite of being a nation state that achieved its independence in 1943, Lebanon has not been able, voluntarily or forcibly, to achieve full sovereignty over its territory, and has also not been able to prevent many countries from interfering in its internal affairs and foreign policy-making, as imposed by the Westphalia treaty. Moreover, Lebanese leaders have facilitated the involvement of foreign actors in their domestic affairs, allowing domestic political structures to be easily influenced, altered and transformed by external powers, like Israel, Syria, Iran and other countries.

### **5.2 Israel's Occupation**

The Palestinian resistance has challenged Lebanon's government, its independence and sovereignty by using its territory as a launching pad for attacking Israel. Thereafter, Israel became more concerned in becoming an active part of the Lebanese political equilibrium. In other words, it can be suggested that the Palestinian resistance which was led by Yasser Arafat instigated Israel to occupy Lebanon. However, this does not mean that Israel did not have ambitions in Lebanon, but Yasser Arafat and his armed groups were the alleged reason for Israel to implement its plans. A clear and explicit

quote from the first Prime Minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, confirms Israel's ambitions in Lebanon:

*"... We should prepare to go over to the offensive with the aim of smashing Lebanon, Transjordan and Syria ... The weak point of the Arab coalition is Lebanon [for] the Moslem regime is artificial and easy to undermine. A Christian state should be established, with its southern border on the Litani River. We will make an alliance with it" (Mowles 1986:1351).*

The above Ben-Gurion quote was made before the establishment of the PLO, and thus, before the starting of any kind of military activity against Israel. Therefore, this quote reveals that Israel's plans are prior to any military activity which used Lebanon as a launching pad to attack Israel. However, after the PLO was established and began infiltration and raids into Israel, Israeli officials were swayed towards implementing Ben-Gurion's strategy (Habib 2009:88).

Israel, after the PLO's regular attacks, started thinking of a solution to their problem with the PLO. Their strategy was based on "approaching Christian and Shiite inhabitants of the South who strongly resented the Palestinians' presence among them..." (Harik 2005:34). It was in 1976 when a local militia was formed with the support of Israel. This militia which "would help to repulse the PLO, thereby protecting Israel's northern frontier" (Harik 2005:34), consisted of locals from the southern villages and renegade units of the Lebanese army, and was led by Saad Haddad, "a Christian who had been officer in the Lebanese army" (Harik 2005:34). However, raids continued across the border continued to be targeted at Israel's northern settlements in spite of this defensive strategy. With this failure, Israel found itself compelled to follow a single option: intervene militarily. In 1978, the Israel Defense Forces invaded south Lebanon in order to destroy the PLO and establish a zone of occupation. Later, after the invasion had met its goal, Israel gave 23 strategic strongpoints to Haddad and his militia in the south before withdrawing its troops (Habib 2009:89). This was the start of what Tel Aviv called its "security belt", or the "State of Free Lebanon" as proclaimed by Haddad on 18 April 1979 (Habib 2009:89).

Soon after, and revealing that Israel had not succeeded completely, but temporarily, in its invasion of 1978, Ariel Sharon, the Defense Minister of Israel from 1981 to 1983, announced that "we have to establish a buffer zone in Lebanon as it is clear that the

Lebanese government will do nothing to stop terrorism. The establishment of such a zone will obviously mean the annexation of part of Lebanese territory” (Mowles 1986:1351). Ariel Sharon’s announcement took effect in 1982. In practice it meant a large Israeli invasion of Lebanon on 6 June 1982. Tel Aviv justified this by claiming they were combating terrorism in the region (Harik 2005:35). That argument is disputed by Israeli authors Zeev Schiff and Ehud Yaari, who suggest that the real motive was a desire on the part of the right-wing Likud Part to destroy any remaining resistance from the PLO and Syria and establish a unilateral Pax Israeli in the region (Harik 2005:35).

The operation, codenamed ‘Peace of Galilee’, involved the Israeli army advancing all the way to Beirut in order to break the power of the Palestinians and their Muslim-leftist allies, and also to form an agreement with Israel’s Christian allies in the hope of making a treaty between the two countries (Harik 2005:35). The Israelis’ intention was clear, they argued: “If that could be done then Syria would be the odd man out” (Harik 2005:35). In 1983, Lebanon signed a peace agreement with Israel under American auspices, despite Syria’s opposition. Later, the strategy’s aims were not fulfilled due to firm opposition from pro-Syrian groups and the assassination of the late President Bachir Gemayel, who was the “militiaman Israel has counted on to swing the peace treaty” (Harik 2005:35). Gemayel’s aim was to sweep every inch of Lebanon clean of Palestinians and to radically alter the political system in favour of the Christians (Harik 2005:35).

Israel’s occupation lasted for more than 20 years, but during the occupation the political and military institutions in Israel did not seek only to expel Yasser Arafat and his militia from Lebanon but also to impose a peace which would lead to Lebanon becoming an independent state that would coexist peacefully with Israel and be an integral part of the free world (Schiff, Yaari & Friedman 1984). Ghassan Tuani, the Lebanese thinker, diplomat and politician and the father of the assassinated MP Gibran Tuani, raises questions about Israel’s objectives, which, according to their claims, aim to impose peace and help in establishing an independent state. Tuani asks:

*“What better proof of this can there be than the very name given to the Israeli invasion: ‘Peace for Galilee’? To occupy almost half of a country, destroy its capital, disrupt its economy, ferociously kill its civilian population by the thousands-for the*

*sake of "Peace for Galilee"-is indeed a very strange notion of peace"* (Tuéni 1982: 85).

The horror of Israeli actions during the occupation did not leave room to doubt that Israel's goals had nothing to do with imposing peace, but rather were the imposition of the Israeli will and political vision on Lebanon for the sake of Israel's national and economic security. In *The Battle of Beirut*, Jansen suggests that if the IDF were to occupy Lebanon for a long time, this would give Israel the opportunity to achieve a degree of socio-economic development in the nearby region, which, geographically and historically, is an integral part of Eretz Yisrael (Jansen 1982:121). While occupying the region, Israel tried to take control of the water resources of the Litani River as well as establish a new political order (Habib 2009:92). Tuéni, with regard to this, argues that "Zionist literature has consistently maintained that the Jewish National Home, and later Israel, needed the water of the Litani and the land south of it" (Tuéni 1982:93).

In sum, the results of the Israeli occupation of Lebanon were disastrous, as in addition to the violation of Lebanese sovereignty and the destruction of Lebanese institutions and cities, the occupation led to deepening divisions within Lebanese society. Chris Mowles argues that "the most lasting effect of the episode is the contribution it has made to the process of confessionalism and cantonisation which has rapidly accelerated in Lebanon as a whole since the Israeli invasion" (Mowles 1986:1364). Of course, Israel was not to succeed in its plans without the help of local political and armed forces in Lebanon. However, the greatest responsibility lies with Israel, in addition to other external powers, in violating Lebanese sovereignty, influencing, altering and transforming domestic political structures, and weakening the Lebanese institutions, thus preventing and sabotaging the democratic system from functioning and developing.

### **5.3 Syria's Tutelage over Lebanon: Occupation?**

In the previous section, it was argued that the presence of Israeli troops in Lebanon was that of an occupying force which invaded Lebanon to achieve a set of political and economic objectives. Syria, the other neighboring country to Lebanon, had an active role in Lebanese political life. Against the will of a significant number of the Lebanese people, and contrary to the Taif agreement, the Syrian army stayed in Lebanon for more than thirty years, before its withdrawal in 2005, in addition to its military intelligence apparatus, which had the right to report and decide on every arcane detail. During that

period, there was division in Lebanon over the description of the Syrian forces operating in the country. Syria's Lebanese allies used to strongly reject describing Syria as an occupying force, while others who were at odds with Syria, used to describe it as an occupying force. To reach a solution for this controversy, international law should be taken into consideration as providing the resolution to this problematic issue.

Eric V. Thompson argues that two primary routes exist for establishing a legitimate conduct of affairs between states under international law, including the conduct of military intervention (Thompson 2002:73). The first route involves conforming to the letter and spirit of the written law, including treaties, charters, covenants and other open agreements between sovereign states. The Charter and Resolutions of the UN is the most widely recognised written corpus of international law in the post-war period, and therefore actions that seek to uphold and enforce UN resolutions are seen as most legitimate. The second route, as outlined by Thompson, involves following the norms of traditional international law, which have evolved from the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 as a means to regulate international relations and discourage openly aggressive behaviour. This tradition included the principle of non-intervention by the early twentieth century. Thompson concludes unequivocally that, by either route, the Syrian intervention in Lebanon was not permitted under international law.

On the one hand, it is true that the Syrian Intervention in Lebanon took place at the request of the Lebanese President and the Lebanese Front, to support them in holding back the Lebanese National Movement and Palestinian armed forces (Krayem 1997), but on the other, this intervention did not take place according to a formal treaty between two sovereign states. Here, a question arises: Should this intervention be regarded as legitimate since it was called for by the President, supported by a certain armed political group, and since it took place during compelling circumstances, and was based on prior Syrian political terms related to political concessions which are in favour of Syria itself? The Syrian military intervention in Lebanon was purely a Syrian strategic interest and not a peacekeeping force seeking to stop the civil war: How can an outside force intervene to stop a civil war at a time when it becomes a part of the on-going conflict, and thus a warring party? To the Syrian Government, infighting in Lebanon weakens Syria and facilitates the penetration of Syrian security. As a Syrian official put it: "it is difficult to distinguish between the security of the Lebanon in the

wider sense of the word, and the security of Syria” (Habib 2009:102) Moreover, if we take into consideration how the deal was struck, we can infer that the intervention did not take place to save Lebanese interests, and thus help the government regain its role, authority and prestige. Eric V. Thompson explains how things happened:

*“Syria, frustrated by the Palestinian assertiveness in Lebanon and concerned that the breakdown of the Lebanese Army would lead to chaos, agreed to protect Franjiyih on the condition that he calls early elections for his successor. Franjiyih agreed, and Syrian troops, disguised as members of Sa’iqah, a Syrian-backed Palestinian organization, fended off the attack on the Presidential Palace. Subsequently, Franjiyih did call for early elections. A candidate favoured by Syria, Elias Sarkis, was elected president by the parliament in May 1976. As the spring of 1976 progressed, Palestinian forces strengthened their hold on much of Lebanon, laying siege to a number of Christian areas. Faced with an emerging de facto partition of Lebanon, and a potentially chaotic breakdown of its south-western neighbour, Syria sent armoured columns into Lebanon on the night of May 31. Syrian forces, although at times facing stiff resistance, quickly broke the siege of Christian territories in northern Lebanon and advanced to Beirut, giving Christians the upper hand, and putting Palestinian forces on the defensive. Virtually overnight, the Syrian Army became a dominating force in the Lebanese milieu”* (Thompson 2002:73-74).

Consequently, from the moment of the Syrian military intervention, a new phase began in Lebanon, while Hafez al-Assad, the late Syrian President, started to look for a legitimate reason for the existence of his 40,000 troops in Lebanon. Assad could find little support or acceptance for his intervention in the international community, and was challenged with either making the Syrian action seem legitimate or being the target of international pressure to call back his troops from Lebanon (Thompson 2002:73-74). He chose the former option, and from 1976 onwards Assad’s government vigorously attempted to establish a *de facto* legitimacy for its actions. It gave its policies the appearance, retroactively, of compliance with international law, and tried to assert that they would result in outcomes that were perceived as “beneficial” on the international stage (Thompson 2002:73-74).

The Syrian government was therefore later able to find legitimate reasons for the presence of its soldiers in Lebanon. Meeting in Cairo on June 8, the Council of the Arab League issued a resolution calling for national reconciliation and unity in Lebanon. They also demanded that a “symbolic Arab security force” be sent out in order to



replace the Syrian soldiers and maintain order and stability (Thompson 2002:75). While Syria did support the resolution soon after Syrian officials began to move away from following its guidelines. On June 13, a statement was issued by Syria's Information Minister arguing that Syria had entered Lebanon to foster "a climate favourable to political dialogue" and maintain its security, and that it was therefore to continue its presence until this task had been completed (Thompson 2002:75). The Arab League met again to discuss the Lebanese issue in Cairo and Riyadh in October 1978. This resulted in a resolution being adopted on October 18 which transformed the Arab Security Force of 2,500 soldiers into a 30,000 strong body called the Arab Deterrent Force (ADF). Its mandate included helping the Lebanese authorities to re-assert their control over public utilities and institutions, to impose and maintain a cease-fire, and to oversee the withdrawal of all armed groups to the positions that they had occupied before April 13 1975. Although this may have been intended to damage Syria's influence in the region, and certainly appeared to do so, the resolution actually worked in their favour. No consensus was reached among the Arab States and no firm plan was drawn up for how the 30,000 troops would be allotted from each state. The decision was rather left to the Lebanese president, Sarkis, who had been put in his position with the support of Syria. He therefore decided that most of the ADF, up to 25,000 men, should be comprised of Syrian soldiers (Thompson 2002:75). Syria, operating under the guise of legitimacy from the Arab Deterrent Force, and thus "under the auspices of a multilateral organization" (Thompson 2002:75) managed to create a cloak of legitimacy for its operations. This, along with time, made Syria a *de facto* authority which could not be overcome, and thus made the Syrian government an integral part of any political solution for the Lebanese crisis.

In 1989, as discussed in an earlier chapter, and after certain regional and international circumstances, the warring forces and Lebanese politicians went to the city of Taif in Saudi Arabia to discuss a solution to the Lebanese crisis.

The Syrian government, due to its position as a strong partner in resolving the crisis of Lebanon, managed during the discussions of the Taif agreement to impose what was seen as a Syrian interest. Albert Mansur, the Lebanese politician who participated in the drafting of the Taif agreement, argues in his book "*The Coup against Taif*", that the agreement organised a gradual withdrawal of the Syrian military from Lebanon

according to a phased plan (Mansur 1993:93). The first phase, according to Mansur, required a full withdrawal of Syrian troops and security forces from all regions into Bekaa region and the entrances to western Bekaa. After the withdrawal, the legitimate forces of the Lebanese army and security forces were to be deployed. This Phase, as Mansur reports, ended two years after the adoption of constitutional reforms. Phase Two started after the gathering of Syrian troops in new locations and according to an agreement between the Lebanese and Syrian governments, in which both of them decided for how long the Syrian army would stay in Bekaa.

However, the formula mentioned in Mansur's book, which talks about linking the fulfilment of the two phases with constitutional reforms, was actually a deception that Syria was able to pass off during the Taif negotiations. In other words, Syria linked the accomplishment and completion of Lebanese sovereignty and independence to constitutional reforms that had to be realised under the supervision of the Syrian army. Of course, as discussed in an earlier chapter, none of these reforms called for by Taif agreement were implemented due to the pressure brought to bear by Syria on the Lebanese government, as, if the reforms had been implemented, then the Syrian government would have lost all of the excuses it had for keeping its army in Lebanon. What supports this argument is a statement published in the *Al-Nahar* Lebanese newspaper by the Syrian Vice-President at that time. In this statement he said in that he hoped that everybody would read the Taif agreement correctly. No one could impose on the Syrian government any explanations or concepts that were not contained in the text. Syria, according to the Vice-President, would guarantee the adoption of the political reforms in a constitutional way, and there were primary and fundamental parts of these reforms that has not been discussed or implemented yet, some of which were related to the abolition of the political sectarianism (Mansur 1993:216).

Syria has often considered Lebanon a key part of its territory (Habib 2009:103) and has always refused to acknowledge Lebanese legitimacy (Slomich 1998-1999). It therefore interpreted the Taif agreement based on the measurement of its strategic interests. Moreover, Syria dealt with Lebanese affairs as Syrian internal affairs, which caused a split within Lebanon. In his book, Albert Mansur, the official who had, and still has, strong ties with the Syrian regime, refers to the aspects that prove the "luring" of Syrian officials, after Taif, to intervene in Lebanon's internal affairs. Of course, Mansur does

not mention that Syrian officials intervened because of their own desire and an interest, but rather he states they were persuaded by certain Lebanese officials to do so. In fact, Mansur's argument does not negate the desire of the Syrian officials to intervene but rather confirms it, since a powerful force like the Syrian government and its officials could not be pulled to intervene if they did not have a vested interest or need to do so. Moreover, using the term "lure" legitimised the intervention and provoked a state of illusion, which showed that the intervention was requested by Lebanese officials. Mansur argues that "luring" the Syrian officials to intervene directly and on daily basis in internal Lebanese affairs, and the constant bullying of some Lebanese politicians and officials for some Syrian officials, and thus, heeding this bullying by the latter, turned the "brothers in Syria" into actual parties in the internal conflicts and part of it (Mansur 1993:93). Mansur continues by stating that the daily interventions for some Syrian officials created a gap and consisted in a contradiction between the stated policy of "our sister Syria" and the reality.

In his book, which was written shortly after Taif agreement, Mansur surmised that this kind of relationship, i.e. "luring" Syrians to become involved in each and every case, whether essential or not, is embodied by four risks (Mansur 1993:93):

1. The prolonged diminishing of national sovereignty and the persistent confiscation of the national decision.
2. Public freedoms suffer a blow and the media freedom gets phased out.
3. More economic abandonment and backwardness.
4. Serious threat to destabilize Lebanon, its unique co-existence, freedom, distinctive democracy and final independent entity.

These risks mentioned by Mansur became facts, since the Syrian officials did not stop, following the Taif agreement until the date of their withdrawal, interfering in the details of Lebanese political life. As Mansur suggested at the time, and which subsequently

proved true, this threatened the religious co-existence between different sects, which is based on a composite democracy, to the point of loss.

Marwan Hamadeh, a strong ally of Syria before 2000 and who later became one of Syria's bitter enemies, believes that the civil war was the beginning of a trend that moved toward the abolition of Lebanese democratization. He argues that Syria and Israel both took advantage of unrest among the Lebanese people to gain more power in Lebanon and launch proxy wars (Hamadeh 2009). Hamadeh, who survived an assassination attempt on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2004, revealed to the researcher during an interview a part of his experience with the Syrian government during the post Taif era, particularly after 2000. He reported that when he was back at the ministry of the displaced and the ministry of economy and trade, he and his political allies still had contacts amongst Syrians, but that their relationships were becoming increasingly tense. He went on to say that this was particularly because they could not accept the fact that the negotiations they usually engaged in with the Syrians, a kind of political negotiation with Damascus involving the Vice President, Foreign Minister and the Chief of Staff, had changed: their negotiations had become limited to dialogue with the Chief of Intelligence in Anjar, who was, at that time, leading the Syrian forces operating in Lebanon. Hamadeh argues that by shifting their channels of negotiations to dialogue with a military commander, "they" meant to downgrade "us" and try to expand their influence from the spheres of politics and security to other areas -, "administration, culture, finance, economy, everything". The result was that Lebanon began to move towards a time where it would merely be a copy of the Syrian regime.

Referring to the transformation of a system which was committed to functioning through democratic means into a militarized political system in Lebanon, in the hands of the military Syrian governor with a military mentality, Hamadeh talked of how the Lebanese officers, under the tutelage of the Syrian army, became more important than ministers; the intelligence became more important than higher civil service, and the whole system of the public administration was turned upside down. He spoke of how if you wanted to be promoted, then you would have to go to Anjar (where the commander of Syrian Forces operating in Lebanon, was based), not to the public service office. According to Hamadeh the system was turning ugly, corrupting everything – the

President, the Speaker of the House, who was already their man – and increasingly interfering with the government (Hamadeh 2009).

Hamadeh reported that, referring to the corruption in which the Syrian army was involved, no contract in Lebanon could be signed without the Syrians having their share. He felt that the whole country was becoming a subdued western province of the Syrian regime. He argued that back in 1991, Lebanon signed a convention with Syria, which, according to him, left so much space for interpretation that in every field there would be a bilateral agreement that would fill the framework called the Treaty of Brotherhood and coordination. In fact, according to Hamadeh, what happened was that in all fields there were normal agreements, like between any other friendly countries, except on foreign policy and security, where they went without the agreement of the parliament. This made Lebanese foreign policy totally dependent on Syria and it was called “The unit tracks”. In the field of security everything was linked and everything would go through channels: up to Syria with information, down from Syria with instructions, to the army, internal security forces, state security forces, etc. The result can, therefore, be described as a kind of web that prevented Lebanon from doing anything. The internal coup d’état that bubbled up because of this situation had gradually been eating the Lebanese constitution from the inside. If by any chance the parliament or the government took any decision that the Syrian regime would not like, even on detailed things. Hamadeh gave an example about the extent of the violation and Syria’s interference in Lebanese affairs. He said:

*“At one time we had a law on the procedures in the tribunal; we took a few measures to relieve the system and make it more democratic, move towards a kind of democratization. The majority voted, then, a week later, Mr Berri, the Speaker, was forced to revoke the law. He was even threatened with losing his position as Speaker of the House if he did not go along with it” (Hamadeh 2009).*

Nouhad el Machnouk, a media man and an MP, revealed in an interview with the Al-Mustaqbal newspaper on 30 July 2011 a number of events which show the absolute authority that the Syrian government had over Lebanon and its interference in every detail of political life, from appointing loyal staff, to fabricating charges against those who did not surrender to its commands. He said that in 1995, during a meeting with the

Lebanese Army Commander, Emile Lahoud, who later became the President of Lebanon, he was told about how the latter had heard he was being appointed to Commander while sitting at home. When Machnouk asked how he got this position, Lahoud answered: “President Assad wants a person who can feel comfortable within Lebanon, and Assad, will hand over power to his son later, and the only one that relaxes his son, is me” (El Machnouk 2011). Another incident exposed by Machnouk was when the assassinated former Prime Minister, Rafic Hariri, met with Bashar Assad, the President of Syria, on 2 December 2003. In that meeting, which took place in Syria and was attended by three Syrian intelligence commanders, Assad asked Hariri to sell his shares in Annahar, the Lebanese daily newspaper. This request, according to Machnouk, was to remove the political cover that the newspaper enjoyed. The third incident happened when Machnouk himself was charged, by the Syrian intelligence operating in Lebanon, of dealing with Israel. The settlement that was later reached in order that ensure that the charges he was facing were dropped, was his shying away from Rafic Hariri’s circle of advisers, and then leaving Lebanon.

These kinds of daily and constant interventions, which served to completely disable the official institutions, left the Lebanese state without any matters to deal with it. It simply implemented orders from the Syrian government and its military representative in Lebanon. In a personal interview conducted by the researcher in 2008, Saad Hariri, the former Prime Minister of Lebanon used these facts to argue that the democratic system of Lebanon is in danger because of this kind of interference (Hariri 2008). He believes that the democratic political system in Lebanon constitutes a threat to Syria, which is why Lebanon has witnessed, and is still witnessing, such a level of intervention. On the other hand, this kind of intervention did not constitute any embarrassment to a group of officials and political parties, as their relationships and association with the Syrian regime was governed by special and strategic interests that deprived them of viewing such interventions as unacceptable or as sabotaging and disrupting the Lebanese State and its institutions. In other words, this group of politicians, officials and political parties accepted that Syria enjoyed a full mandate over Lebanon, as long as it guaranteed their achieving their private and strategic interests. For example, the Secretary General of Hezbollah, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah’s “historical” speech given in 2005 during a ceremony to thank Syria, which had been organized by the March 8

political coalition, did not mention any negative aspects of the thirty years during which Syrian troops were present in Lebanon. Nasrallah, who addressed the masses in the name, and as the leader, of a pro-Syria political coalition, summarized a long history of relationships with the Syrian regime and the era of its presence in Lebanon. Nasrallah stated in his speech that “we would like to offer our thanks to the resisting Syrian army, which stood at our side during all the years of defence and resistance” (Noe & Blanford 2007:321). Nasrallah, who also extended his thanks to the Syrian President Bashar Assad, said: “Your presence in Lebanon is not material or military; you are present in our hearts and souls, and in our past, present and future” (Nasr Allah, Noe & Blanford 2007:321). Moreover, Nasrallah showed full loyalty, and the loyalty of those political parties on whose behalf he was speaking, to the Syrian regime when he said:

*“To Syria- to which the will of God, history, geography, kinship, and the common fate has bound us- we reiterate today our gratitude and solidarity, and wish for it a life of dignity and pride, and a head held high. We want Syria to remain the den of lions it always was, and want to proclaim: Long live al-Assad’s Syria! The den of lions in Damascus will always be a den for all the lions in Lebanon!”* (Noe & Blanford 2007:321).

This speech, in this sense, should be enough to demonstrate the links between the Syrian regime and this political coalition. Moreover, it reveals the close correlation between the Syrian regime and this political coalition, led by Nasrallah. This speech, if looked at deeply, shows the blind subordination of certain Lebanese political parties and leaders to the politics of Syria. We should ask ourselves: what does it mean for a Lebanese leader to include in his speech words of praise to a foreign army, a foreign country, and the head of a foreign state? It means, of course, that the presence of the Syrian army in Lebanon and the Syrian regime’s intervention was of great importance to this political group. Moreover, accepting the actions of the Syrian government and its army in Lebanon, or turning a blind eye to it, means that this political group preferred their own private interest over the national interest. For example, Hezbollah had the ambition of keeping its weapons, regardless of the cost at the national level, and even if this cost was breaching Lebanese sovereignty, corruption, suppression of freedoms, interference in appointing employees, ministers, army commanders and even the head

of the Lebanese state. Thus, Hezbollah, with all that it represents, was covering the excesses of the Syrian regime in Lebanon in order to achieve its own interests.

Unlike some, who argue that the Syrian regime intervened in Lebanon to restore peace, it appears to the researcher, following the argument above, that the Syrian army did not enter Lebanon to restore peace, as how can a military force which intervenes to bring peace become a party involved in war? Is it not the duty of peace forces to create and establish a buffer zone between warring parties? Furthermore, how does a foreign army which aims to establish peace become an essential partner in the agreement that aims at stopping the war? Is it not logical that the parties involved in signing the peace agreement are those who were fighting during the war? These questions may lead to the conclusion that Syria, the partner which became involved in the Taif agreement, was a partner in the events that lead to the Taif agreement, that is to say the Lebanese civil war. Thereafter, Syria did not contribute in the reconciliation process between the disputing parties, but was rather amongst the rival groups.

To sum up, one of the parties which contributed to igniting the Lebanese crisis and resolving it, according to Syria's terms, was Syria itself. However, Syria was not to succeed in its political project without the help of the Lebanese ruling class, some of which have governed for Syria and some of which have opposed it. If, therefore, the Lebanese powers worked together to build a stronger, democratic Lebanon, outside interference, i.e. from Syria, would not have occurred. Nevertheless, Syria is not blameless in this affair: in the pursuit of its own interests it infringed on Lebanon's sovereignty. In doing so, Syria played a key role in undermining Lebanon's political institutions, sometimes removing them altogether, and weakened democracy in the country. In short, Syria's actions stopped Lebanon progressing towards democratization and development.

In, short, since before the Lebanese civil war, which broke out in 1975, until after the Taif agreement of 1989, Lebanon remained a place of conflict, strife, intervention of, and competition between, different external forces. Apparently, these interventions resulted in huge violations of Lebanese sovereignty. As argued in the introduction of this chapter, "Westphalian sovereignty refers to the autonomy of domestic authority structures—that is, the absence of authoritative external influences" (Krasner 2001:2). But, what appears from the above discussion, and the context of the facts that were



discussed, show the inapplicability of the definition on Lebanon. In other words, what appears is that the external influences and interventions were authoritative enough to decide in domestic politics and to control the state institutions.

Moreover, if democracy means “rule of the people”, then, does external intervention retain any role for the people to play? The “rule of the people” cannot go in parallel with foreign interference and occupation, and thus is no longer valid under these two conditions. For example, even if elections were held, they remain subject to the terms imposed by the foreign intervener and intervening power, and thus the role of the people means nothing more than contributing to a sham electoral process, which in no sense reflects their aspirations or helps them to achieve their ambitions.

In the next chapter, firstly the Iranian role in Lebanon will be discussed. Iran, as a regional power and as an external key player in Lebanese domestic politics, had to be discussed here. But, the organic correlation between Iran and Hezbollah makes us incapable of separating the two topics. In other words, studying Hezbollah since its foundation will show the extent of the Iranian role, and will clarify the extent of this correlation and the impossibility of separation.

## **6. Chapter Six: Hezbollah State vs. March 14 State: Whose Political Agenda is more conducive to Democratic Lebanon?**

### **6.1 Introduction**

In 2003 Thomas Friedman reported that when speaking with an Egyptian friend in Cairo she jested: "President Bush: Take Syria -- get Lebanon for free" (Friedman 2003). This joke demonstrates how Lebanon became, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, equivalent to a hostage without any jurisdictions. Of course, the situation in Lebanon did not reach this point without cause or justification. Many factors lead to this: State weakness, the dependence of most officials and Lebanese parties on external forces, in addition to certain countries using Lebanon as an arena in order to settle scores with other countries.

By the year 2000, the year when the Israeli forces withdrew from South Lebanon, the armed Hezbollah, which was leading the resistance against the Israeli occupation for nearly fifteen years, decided to act internally with the intention of becoming an active partner in domestic politics. But Hezbollah, which was supposed to hand over its weapons to the Lebanese state after the absence of reasons, kept its weapons. This led to the imbalance of power in Lebanon: on one side, an armed party partaking in support from Iran and Syria, which many agree is more powerful than the Lebanese state itself, and on the other, political parties, most of who had handed over their weapons to the Lebanese army after the civil war.

It can be argued that at some point after 2000, two key players were in command of political power in Lebanon; Hezbollah and its allies, against the other political parties, which after 2005 put themselves under the banner of the March 14<sup>th</sup> political coalition. This phase carried significant risks to Lebanon which had witnessed extraordinary divisions, assassinations and bombings. This period also saw an extraordinary weakness of the state's role in controlling the rhythm of political life in Lebanon. It revealed the extent of the state's diminishment, the fragility of its institutions and its vulnerability to political parties, some of which are not registered yet. This raises some questions: Who is Hezbollah? And how did it grow up? What is the role of Iran? And how is it that this

armed party was able to reach the stage where it has become more powerful than the state and its army? In addition, who are the other political parties that are opposed to and are indeed still opposing Hezbollah? And finally how has Lebanon become divided into two rival factions, each with its own political agenda?

This chapter will try to answer the above questions, in addition it will analyze two possible scenarios of state governance; the first, Hezbollah, and the second, the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition, due to the fact that these two forces are the most important and influential parties in the country. Moreover, this chapter will seek to answer the following questions: what would happen to the Lebanese democratic system if Hezbollah came to power and the same question applied to the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition. Thus this chapter can be divided into three sections, the first will consider the history and development of Hezbollah, and the second will regard the equivalent factors for the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition, while the third section will discuss the possible scenarios if either of them were to rule the country.

## **6.2 Lebanon: Iran's Battlefield Anteriority**

“How many Shiites live in the southern part of Lebanon? Half a million? One Million? Let them be a scapegoat for the Islamic Revolution in Iran” (El Amine 2008) : Thus declared an Iranian senior politician who was visiting Lebanon in the late 1980's. This provocative statement reveals with clarity the Iranian intentions. It explains the ambitions and the bulk of the Iranian intervention in Lebanon. However, this statement alone may not be sufficient to prove the presence of such an interference, as the intervention of any state in the affairs of another state requires more solid and consistent evidence that shows the causes of such an intervention, its extent and the intervention methods.

In 1979, (as is termed in Iran), the “just” Islamic State was established, and with it, a religious legal mandate took place: This Islamic state should be defended, on the basis that if the “just” state has been established, then necessarily it should be defended; and if it necessarily should be defended then the tools and means of defense should be found

and established (El Amine 2009). The party that believes in exporting the Islamic revolution as a means of protecting it, started considering the methods that would lead to the protection of the revolution, and consequently the Islamic regime. Thus they began utilizing two parallel strategies:

- 1- Finding already established Sunni or Shiite political parties that become subject to the Iranian Supreme Leader.
- 2- Establishing armed Shiite organizations that have sincere and absolute loyalty to the Iranian Islamic regime. The role of these organizations is to protect the regime externally by distracting the surrounding enemies i.e. Israel.

The Supreme Leader at that time, Sayyed Khomeini, who believed that he had an absolute mandate on the Muslim people and their money (El Amine 2007), supported this theory. He argued that there is a global role for the Iranian revolution, to lead the oppressed in the world (El Amine 2009). Khomeini felt that the Islamic revolution in Iran is the only revolutionary Islamic model, and thus exporting it is a religious duty that reflects political and military objectives. These political objectives, according to Khomeini, drive “us” to support Islamic movements by providing financial and military assistance, and not just relying on the sufficiency of external propaganda (El Amine 2009).

The religious authority, Sayyed Ali El-Amine, who during the early 1980’s was a Lecturer in Jurisprudence in Qom, Iran, as well as was the teacher of the top Leaders of the later established Hezbollah of Lebanon, testifies that after the Islamic revolution in Iran, he “started to feel that something is happening at the level of exporting the revolution” (El Amine 2008). However, during that period, El-Amine, as he argues, was somewhat uncertain. In the mid 1980’s, after his return to Lebanon, El-Amine started to witness the occurrence of what he used to fear about. He said:

*“After my return to Lebanon, I started to notice the emergence of some features related to the Iranian religious character. Iranian officials started looking forward to see Iran’s logo everywhere: religious schools, Mosques and other places. Moreover, I noted that a number of my students and colleagues, started to become influenced by*

*the Iranian cultural ties, as well as the ideologies of the Iranian regime. I tried to realign what was going wrong by arguing that it is not in the interest of the Shiites of Lebanon to be attached and mere followers to Iran, and therefore, to be a replica of the Iranians, and also, it is not in our interest to endorse any Iranian political state in Lebanon. After months of debate, I failed to convince some of them. I left Beirut, refusing to teach a group of people who had become clearly influenced and submissive to Iran, and thus, were no longer controlling their decisions" (El Amine 2008).*

The statements of several Lebanese Shiite clerics, who were at the time (and still are) loyal to Iran, support El-Amine's point of view. For example: "All the Iranian authorities, from those of the seminaries of Qom, to the Revolutionary Guards, to the Ministry of Interior, are considering the Lebanese issue and giving their opinions about it" (Sharara 1998).

Likewise, the following statement, given by the Deputy Secretary General, Sheikh Naim Qassem, demonstrates that the Supreme leader in Iran has the ultimate authority in deciding what those believing in his political project should do, including those who founded Hezbollah (later): "The extent of the power conferred to the Supreme Leader is very clear. He is faithful to the application of the Islamic provisions and political decision-making related to the major interests of the nation. Indeed he has the authority to make decisions concerning whether to go to war or keep peace" (Qassem 2002:74). Additionally, Sheikh Azari Qomi, a theorist of the Islamic regime, states: "For the Supreme religious Leader there is no responsibility other than the establishment of the Islamic regime, even if that required him to give orders to temporarily stop the nation from praying, fasting, partaking in pilgrimage, or even believing in monotheism"(Bakhsh 48). Moreover, an Iranian official proclaimed that: "In Lebanon, the fundamental issue for us is that Lebanon remains the playground and the location of the conflict with Israel; Islam requires that Lebanon attains this role" (Katzman 1996:104). This acts as evidence of Iran's intention to lay hands on Lebanon and use it as an arena for conflict with Israel.

The above argument not only reveals the intention of the Iranian regime but also clarifies it. The regime proposes the extension of Iran's authority to Lebanon

consequently creating an outpost on the Mediterranean as well as on the border with Israel. It also demonstrates Iran's desire to find the means by which political and military activity can be generated in Lebanon using domestic Lebanese tools. But before defining these domestic tools, the regime in Iran started interfering directly through the help of the Syrian regime. Judith Palmer Harik considers the beginning aspects of the Iranian's regime activity in Lebanon in her book. She reports that in 1982 Syria and Iran came to an agreement concerning the mujahidin training camps (Harik 2005:39). Harik reveals the story as follows:

*"[The deal endorsed that the] Syrian troops stationed in the Bekaa would provide the security necessary for the training camps set up [of mujahidin] and help with logistics. For its part of the arrangement, Iran would provide the fighters with training and monthly salaries and take care of benefits for their families. Weapons sent from Iran for the mujahidin would be forwarded over land in Syrian trucks to the Bekaa and other locations in Lebanon."*

Furthermore, Harik suspected that several bombings, including those which targeted the American Embassy in Beirut in 1983, in addition to the kidnappings of Americans and some other westerns, including British citizens, which started in 1982, suggested that the Iranian 's were responsible for these deeds. A discussion held with a senior Lebanese official at that time, strengthens her argument, he states: "it was thought that fundamentalist groups or even a few individuals recruited by Iran and/or Syria had set up these operations and found martyrs willing to carry them out" (Harik 2005:36). Moreover, to further her argument, concerning the kidnapping operations, Harik provides information extrapolated from a renowned terror expert, Magnus Ranstorp:

*"Ranstorp claims that the kidnappings occurred in stages as a result of several different motivations on the part of the perpetrators and their Iranian backers and that five of the victims died or were executed by Hezbollah, including Army Lt Colonel William Higgins and William Buckley, the chief of CIA's Lebanese operations" (Harik 2005:37).*

These events indicate that the Iranian regime progressed from the stage of having an agreement with the Syrian regime, to the post-agreement stage. In other words, the Iranian regime was in a position that if any activity were to be carried out, it should

happen directly without the need of the Syrian regime, or at least, without the need to coordinate with the latter. It also marks, in practice, the start of Hezbollah's phase in Lebanon, as an armed organization working to implement the Iranian political project. This view is supported by the statement of Nabih Berri, the Amal movement Leader and the current Speaker of the Parliament, spoken in 1990, accusing Iran of having its army in Lebanon:

*“In the Lebanese context, there is no party named Hezbollah, or a resistance named as Islamic resistance, but there is on the Lebanese land an Iranian party called Hezbollah and an Iranian resistance called the Islamic resistance. We congratulate you [Iran] for the Withdrawal of Saddam Hussein's troops from your country, with the hope that you will withdraw Ali Mohtashami<sup>61</sup> and his troops from our land” (El Amine 2009).*

In sum, the Lebanese government, being aware of almost all the incidents mentioned above, including the deal between the Syrian and the Iranian government and its undertakings, was wholly ineffective and too weak to be able to deal with it effectively (Harik 2005). What can be deduced from this thus is that the inability of the Lebanese government, in conjunction with the help of the Syrian regime, and of course the determination of Iran, facilitated the Iranian regime to establish a foothold in Lebanon. This foothold began to take its place with direct cooperation with Syria, and resulted in becoming an indirect activity, through a Lebanese proxy, called Hezbollah. In the next section, Hezbollah as a whole will be discussed, starting with its foundation, up to its institutions, armed activities and political project.

### **6.3 Hezbollah's Foundation**

As discussed in an earlier chapter, Hezbollah, the Iranian backed militia, which defines its identity as an Islamic jihadi movement, and “whose emergence is based on an

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<sup>61</sup> According to several resources, Mohtashami is a cleric who was active in the 1979 Iranian Revolution and later became interior minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran. As written in Ranstorp book, *Hezbollah in Lebanon*, page 126, 103, He is "seen as a founder of the Hezbollah movement in Lebanon and one of the "radical elements, advocating the export of the revolution," in the Iranian clerical hierarchy.

ideological, social, political and economical mixture in a special Lebanese, Arab and Islamic context,” (Cobban 1986:13) started its military activity in Lebanon in the early 1980s engaging in acts that “constitute terrorism in its more precise and generally understood sense.”(Norton 2009:77). Augustus Richard Norton, professor of international relations and anthropology at Boston University, justifies the latter description by arguing that “by definition, any act of violence that it commits or seeks to commit is an act of terrorism, and so there are no gray [sic] areas of justifiable behaviour in which terrorists may lurk. Whether for law enforcement officials, spies, or soldiers, the issue is assumed to be settled” (Norton 2009:78).

Before discussing this further, it is important to consider in some depth several of the conditions that were behind the establishment of Hezbollah. After the Islamic revolution in Iran, the Iranian regime decided to launch a plan which would link the Shia minorities in the Arab and Islamic world with the regime itself (El Amine 2009). Norton argues that “for Iran, the creation of Hezbollah was a realization of the revolutionary state’s zealous campaign to spread the message of self-styled “Islamic revolution”” (Norton 2009:24). The first location which the regime in Iran decided to start with, was the republic of Lebanon. Lebanon was chosen on account of several factors:

- 1- The weakness of the Lebanese state. This made it easy for the regime in Iran to start its political and military activity without major obstacles.
- 2- The presence of a significant number of Shi'ites in Lebanon.
- 3- The presence of leaders and clerics that are absolutely loyal to the Islamic regime in Iran and to its revolution and its principles.
- 4- Lebanon’s strategic location on the border with Israel, the strongest ally to the United States of America in the Middle East.

On this basis, in 1982 the regime in Iran began its mission by entrusting the task of initiating activity in Lebanon to some of its officials, Iranian and Lebanese Shiite clerics



who used the Iranian embassy in Beirut as their headquarters (El Amine 2009). This group focused on trying to link the Shiites of Lebanon in a sheer Iranian political structure. The plan was first revolved around an attempt to penetrate the regulatory body of the Amal movement, which used to dominate the Shiite areas, mainly in the southern part of Lebanon, and in the southern

suburb of Beirut. The plan succeeded in making a rift in the Amal's movement regulatory body through the cooperation of some of its officials, for example, Hussein Moussawi<sup>62</sup>, who took it upon himself to create this rift through the withdrawal of a small number of his supporters. Moussawi managed to establish the Islamic Amal Organization. But soon after it was discovered that Moussawi's mission had failed as his organization couldn't achieve the task required, which was creating an attractive state to the Shia in general, and thus controlling the Shia areas. After this failure an alternative plan was sought, to establish a military organization which would stand in contrast to Amal. Therefore, the so-called Party of God was established and guaranteed all the requirements of revolutionary and Jihad mission, it relied on several right wing clerics with revolutionary ideologies alongside many intellectuals who had resigned from Amal in addition to the direct supervision and direct screening from the Iranian Revolutionary Guard (El Amine 2009). Judith Palmer Harik states in a similar vein:

*“As we know, Lebanese Shiite fundamentalists were looking for a role in the struggle against Israel and some had split from the Shiite Amal movement to find one. These men, and others like them, suited Iran's foreign policy requirements in terms of their ideological commitments and willingness to act upon them, as some had already demonstrated in the terrorist allegedly sponsored by the Islamic republic in West Beirut. These men and other committed Shiite fundamentalists who, after 1979, were swept up by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards to form an organizational structure and to cohere around a local leadership that would be able to exploit the opportunity for militant jihad being offered. Potential mujahidin were plentiful in the Bekaa where Hussein Moussawi, the leader of the breakaway group Islamic Amal, resided and other young Shiite men from the dahiyeh, Beirut's suburb, and the South could also be encouraged to commit themselves to the holy struggle against the 'usurpers*

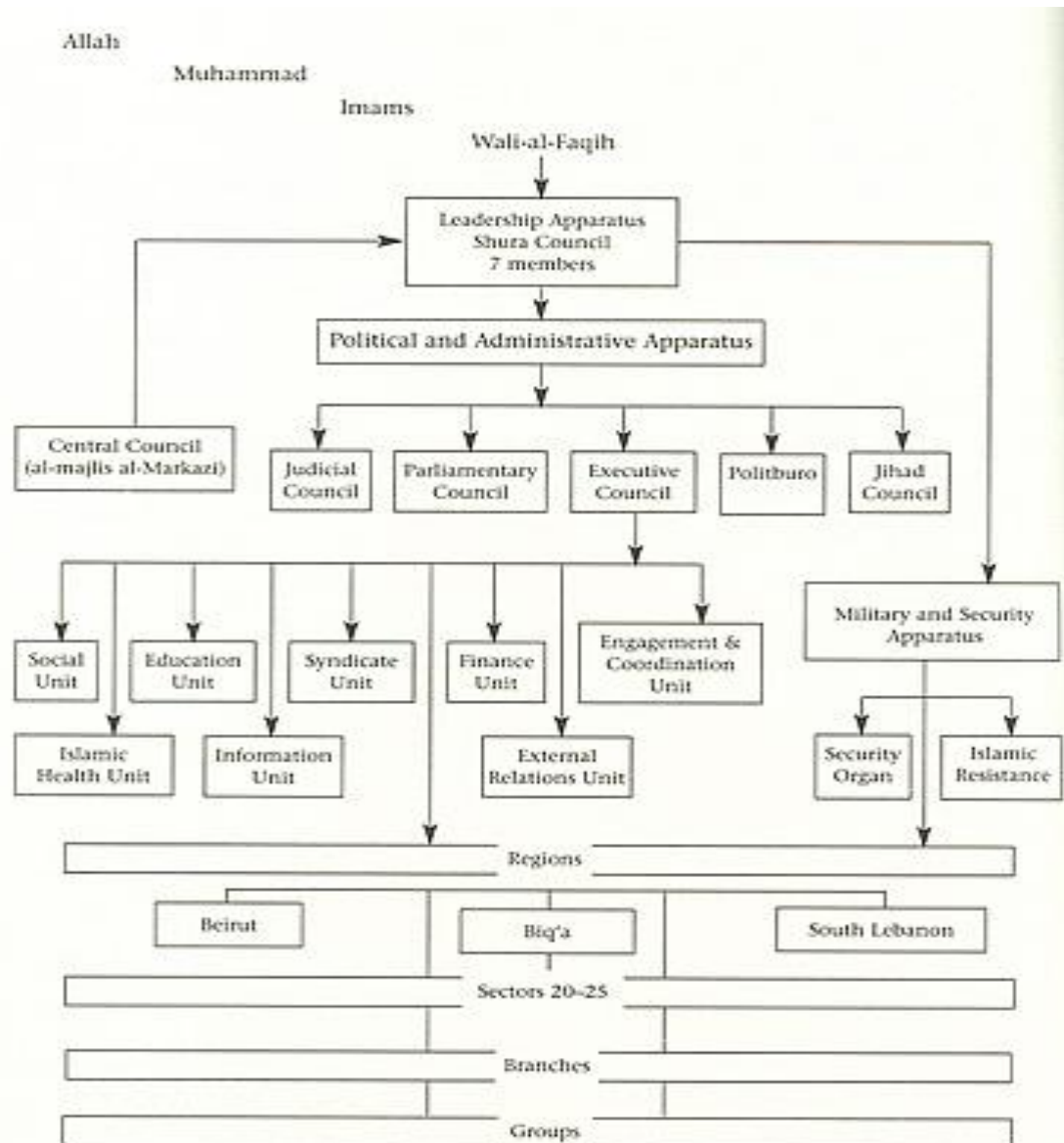
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<sup>62</sup> In 2009, Moussawi became one of Hezbollah's representatives in the Lebanese parliament.

*of Palestine'. Iran's support for this group, which would eventually become Hezbollah, could deliver two important foreign policy goals: the capacity to fight Israel through a proxy, which allowed it direct entrance into the influence into the Middle East war/peace equation and the expansion of Shiite Islam's influence in Lebanon through Hezbollah's developing role there''(Harik 2005:39-40).*

Consequently, the above discussion provides proof for the theory that Hezbollah is an Iranian product, and also that this Armed party was not a Lebanese born invention that aims to participate for the good of the country, but conversely, to satisfy the Iranian ambitions that cannot be achieved without expanding into the Mediterranean, and thus, without finding a solid ground in Lebanon.

In the meantime Hezbollah, the strongest and most complicated political party in Lebanon in was founded but with a complex organizational structure (see figure 1) (Hamzeh 2004:46). The figure below, which was taken from the book *"In the path of Hizbullah"*, portrays the organizational structure of the armed Hezbollah. Hamzeh, in his book, explains clearly each and every unit of this structure. However, it is worth noting that in the early years after Hezbollah's establishment, this organizational structure was not clear and declared, but only became clear after the election of the first Secretary General of Hezbollah in 1989.



Source: Author's composite figure based on various activities reported by *Al-Ahraf* between 1988 and 2002, and on interviews.

Figure 4.1. Hezbollah's Organizational Structure

**Figure 1: Hezbollah Organizational Structure (Adopted from HAMZEH, A. N. (2004). *In the path of Hezbollah*. Syracuse, N.Y., Syracuse University Press. p. 46)**

In short, before the official announcement, Hezbollah with the support of the Iranian regime, as discussed in earlier part of this chapter and in chapter four, managed to conduct several kidnapping and bombing operations. Additionally, Hezbollah were able to “spearhead the struggle against Israel in South Lebanon” (Hamzeh 2004:46), by

conducting several attacks on its occupying troops. Officially Hezbollah didn't announce its manifesto until 1986. In that manifesto, Hezbollah highlighted its ideology and proclaimed its mission in Lebanon, and its vision to both the Arab world and the whole World.

### **6.3.1 Hezbollah: The political manifesto**

In 1986, on the first anniversary of the death of one of Hezbollah's senior leaders, Sheikh Ragheb Harb, Hezbollah announced its manifesto. The manifesto explained the political project of Hezbollah, and also showed its organic association with the Iranian regime. In addition, the manifesto demonstrated that Hezbollah, as a political and armed organization, does not receive its orders from Lebanese local leader, but from an Iranian leader. The following are sections taken from the political manifesto of Hezbollah announced in 1986:

*"Dear free vulnerable people, we are the sons of the Hezbollah nation in Lebanon, we greet you and we address through you the whole world: known figures and institutions, political parties, organizations and political, humanitarian, and media bodies, with no exclusion of anyone; because we are keen to let our voice be heard by all, so you can understand what we are saying, come to grips with our proposal, and study our project. We are the sons of the Hezbollah nation that God granted victory to in Iran, and we have managed to find the core of a new central state of Islam in the world. We announce that we are committed to the orders of the current wise and just long-lasting leadership of Ayatollah Ruhollah Musawi Khomeini, the founder of the Muslim's Revolution and the cause for their glorious renaissance. And on this basis, we in Lebanon are not an organizationally closed party, and we are not a political tight framework, but we are a nation that is associated with Muslims in all parts of the world, bound with them in a strong ideological and political tie, which is the Islam of God, perfected its message by the seal of His Prophet, Muhammad. Hence, what happens to the Muslims in Afghanistan or Iraq or the Philippines or other parts of the world affects the body of our Islamic nation that we are part of it, and if any harm happens we move to face it out according to the legitimate religious duty, and in light of a general political vision determined by the mandate of the spiritual leader of Iran. As for our military capabilities, they are such that nobody can imagine their*

*efficiency and size. Also, we do not have a separate military apparatus, but each and every one of us is a combat soldier when Jihad is called for, and every one of us takes his mission in the battle, according to the mandate of the legitimate framework of the spiritual leader in Iran ... We are now in an uphill struggle with the forces of arrogance until we achieve the following objectives:*

- 1- Throwing Israel completely out of Lebanon as a prelude to remove them permanently from existence.*
- 2- Freeing Jerusalem from the clutches of the occupation.*
- 3- Allowing our people to decide their fate and decide it freely and to choose the governing system that they want.*

*But, to be frank, we do not hide our commitment to the rule of Islam and we call on everyone to choose the Islamic system, which guarantees unity, justice and dignity for all, and prevents any attempt by new colonies to sneak into our country again ... and we declare that we aspire to make Lebanon an integral part of the political map which is ruled by Islam and it's just leadership, and which is an enemy to America, global arrogance and international Zionism. This ambition is the ambition of a nation and not the ambition of the party, and the choice of the people and not the choice of a gang.*

*In Lebanon, why do we face the existing system? This is our vision and our perception of what we want and in the light of this vision and perception; we face the current system on account of two basic considerations:*

- 1- For being a creature of the global arrogance and part of the political map of anti-Islam.*
- 2- Because it is essentially an unjust combination which cannot be repaired and get grafted, but must be changed from the root" (El Amine 2009).*

Democracy, as is commonly argued, "Needs strong and sustainable political parties with the capacity to represent citizens and provide policy choices that demonstrate their ability to govern for the public good" (Norris 2005:1). Some might postulate that in the year that Hezbollah's manifesto was announced Lebanon was seriously divided on account of both the civil war and the lack of a properly functioning government. Supposing that this argument is true, political parties, whether established in a democracy or not, are supposed to serve multiple functions. Pippa Norris, the McGuire Lecturer in Comparative Politics at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at

Harvard University, argues that political parties are necessary in order to build and accumulate support among vast coalitions of citizens' organizations and interest groups; to enable many conflicting demands to be incorporated into rational policy programs; to effectively choose and instruct legislative candidates and political leaders; to supply voters with options to choose from among the governing teams and policies; and, if elected to office, to effectively manage the process of government and stand collectively responsible for their actions in successive governmental contests (Norris 2005:3-4). She summarizes the long list of the potential functions of political parties under five key headings:

- 1- The integration and mobilization of citizens.
- 2- The articulation and aggregation of interests.
- 3- The formulation of public policy.
- 4- The recruitment of political leaders.
- 5- The organization of parliament and government.

Of course, these responsibilities and duties, which determine the functionality of any political party, impose on that party a requirement to comply with them before engaging in political activity. They must also act within the Laws imposed by the applicable law within any state. The political manifesto of Hezbollah, if analyzed, does not mention any of these responsibilities and it does not identify any local task that should be achieved. Furthermore, the manifesto not only does not recognize the domestic rule of law, but also it calls to overthrow the infidel and arrogant political system and replace it with an Islamic regime which is an affiliate of the parent system in Iran. As regards to making a regime change, the manifesto does not take into account the existing religious diversity in Lebanese society, but instead it tries to impose the point of view of a certain group on the other groups. In other words, on one side, yes, the manifesto gives the right for the people to choose the kind of the governing system they want, but on the other side, it calls for a regime change, and prefers the replaced regime to be an Islamic one, without considering the opinions of the people, and without taking a referendum on it. Furthermore, the manifesto does not address the Lebanese as being Lebanese, but as an integral part of a nation; a nation that is committed to the orders of the religious

leader in Iran. Besides, the manifesto does not seek any integration or mobilization of citizens.

The manifesto which reveals the presence of a genetic relation between Hezbollah and Iran, the dependency on its government and its leader, and the submission to the religious and political agenda of the latter, seeks to embroil Lebanon, the government and the people, in foreign conflicts not decided by the State. In addition, it does not by any mean express either the public mood or their opinion. Of course, on one side, the manifesto refers to an important issue, that of resisting the occupation, which some argue complies with the right to self-determination, thus giving peoples living under foreign military occupation an absolute right to resist against the occupying power, but on the other side, it calls for removing permanently a present state which is recognized by the United Nation. Yes, if a state, any state, was an occupying power, it may be a legal right to resist until reaching an end for such an occupation, but it does not give any the right to work on removing a state from presence. This begs the question of whether political parties are allowed to have ambitions which go outside the borders of the country in which they reside. And, thus, are political parties when are not the legal governing power that rules the state, allowed to act on behalf of the foreign ministry which regulates the relations with other countries? Additionally, the manifesto seeks to sabotage Lebanon's relations with several countries, for it refers to Hezbollah's relations with other Muslims in their homelands, and it offers a helping hand in case they suffer any harm.

Hezbollah in the manifesto did not present itself as a political party seeking change using peaceful and democratic means, but instead presented itself as an international armed organization, seeking to achieve its political ambitions through the use of illegitimate force. Hezbollah, which in the words of its current Secretary-General, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, stresses that, the "current leadership, our will and mandate, and the decision of war and peace, are in the hands of the supreme leader of Iran" (El Amine 2009), through several years has managed to apply some of what was introduced in its manifesto:

- 1- Kept upholding close ties with the Iranian regime.
- 2- Kept its arms.
- 3- Abducted foreign nationals.

- 4- Prearranged bombings which targeted foreign interests.
- 5- Triggered proxy wars with Israel.
- 6- Established cells, some regulatory and some armed. i.e. Egypt, Azerbaijan and South America.
- 7- Helped political organization in different countries i.e. Bahrain and assisted armed organization's in Gaza and West Bank territories.<sup>63</sup>
- 8- Imposed a policy on the Lebanese state which is compatible with its interests.
- 9- Organized armed Parades and used its weapons in domestic conflicts in order to makes changes to particular political certainties.

In short, these activities and this kind of policy, which will be discussed in further depth later in this chapter, are contrary to international and domestic laws. Additionally, they go beyond the role of political parties which was discussed earlier in this section and in a previous chapter. Besides, the manifesto which proposed these policies and activities, and on which Hezbollah's current policy is still based, suggests in a sense that Hezbollah as an armed party, is a compelling power and authority that equals that of the state. In addition to being an armed party that "worships its arms" (Mitri 2009), Hezbollah undermines any possible sovereignty of the existing national state. In the words of the former minister, Professor Mitri, "Hezbollah is a hindrance to the Lebanese sovereignty and also a hindrance to the state being able to exercise its authority on the Lebanese territory" (Mitri 2009).

### 6.3.2 Hezbollah's Strategic Wings

Hezbollah, the armed organization which until now neither applied nor obtained a license from the Ministry of Interior, depends, to ensure the success of its project, on many factors, mainly those of a political, social and military nature. In the next section,

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<sup>63</sup> In an Interview with a Kuwaiti daily newspaper, Sayyed Nasrallah said that "we are committed, in principle, to supporting this *intifada* and standing side by side with the Palestinian people; but we would rather not talk about the quality and quantity of our assistance to them. One of the best ways we can lend our support to the *intifada* is by not mentioning how we ought to conduct it."



the sociopolitical aspect will be considered, followed by a discussion about the military arms that Hezbollah relies on mainly as a means of power.

### **6.3.2.1 Socio-political Wing**

#### ***a. Political discourse***

Hezbollah, as discussed earlier, announced its political project through a public manifesto in 1986. This manifesto highlighted and explained its point of view to Lebanon, Muslims and the World. Augustus Richard Norton argues that this remarkable programmatic manifesto bears a strong made-in-Tehran coloration (Norton 2009:35). He debates that this manifesto “emphasized that the 1987-79 revolution in Iran served as an inspiration to action, a proof of what can be accomplished when the faithful gather under the banner of Islam” (Norton 2009:35). Of course, pledging loyalty to Iran requires a declaration of commitment to its policy, and committing to this policy requires the application of its methodology including those which are revolutionary. For example, making a revolution on “all the western ideas concerning man’s origin and nature” in addition to the western style of governance. Such conditions must be upheld for governing as part of the Islamic state obligates Hezbollah to believe in all its subdivisions, and to reject all other parallel forms of governance.

For Hezbollah political discourse must be divided in two phases. The pre-Taif agreement phase and the post-Taif agreement phase. In the pre-Taif agreement phase, the political discourse of Hezbollah was built on an aggressive strategy, which assaulted all those bearing contrary thoughts, whether they were countries, domestic political parties, groups or individuals. Concerning the political discourse directed to the outside world, Hezbollah attacked, in addition to Israel, the Soviet Union, United States of America and France. Regarding the Soviets, Hezbollah proclaimed that:

*“The Soviets are not one iota different from the Americans in terms of political danger, indeed are more dangerous than them in terms of ideological considerations*

*as well, and this requires that light be shed on this fact and that the Soviets be assigned their proper place in the forces striving to strike at the interests of the Muslim people and arrogate their political present and future”* (Norton 2009:36-37).

Concerning the United States of America, Hezbollah made accusations about its role in inflicting the suffering of the Muslims in Lebanon (Norton 2009). They used the words of the Spiritual Leader in Iran, Sayyed Khomeini, to attack the United States by arguing that “Imam Khomeini, the leader, has repeatedly stressed that America is the reason for all our catastrophes and the source of all malice. By fighting it, we are only exercising our legitimate right to defend our Islam and the dignity of our nation” (Norton 2009:37). Norton argues that the French were attacked, mainly because of their long-standing backing of the Maronites in Lebanon, and also on account of their arms sales to Iraq during the Iranian-Iraqi war. In 1989, Norton reports, the Hezbollah radio station noted that the “French should be taught a lesson because of their scorn for other people and lack of respect for Lebanese Muslims” (Norton 2009:37).

Even the Lebanese political parties were not safe from criticism. Indeed, the Amal movement, the competing Shiite party which used to control the Shiite areas, faced a broad political attack ending in a Shiite-Shiite war which lasted for years. This war between the Amal movement and Hezbollah, forced Nabih Berri, the Amal leader and the current Speaker of the Parliament, to say that “Hezbollah killed from our leaders more than Israel did” (El Amine 2009). In addition, the Communist party in Lebanon suffered from an aggressive political discourse, with the result that “Dozens, if not hundreds, of party members were killed in a brutal, bloody campaign of suppression and assassination in 1984 and 1985” (Norton 2009:37). Hezbollah also showed hostility to the Christian parties. Considering these parties as Israel’s agents in Lebanon, Sayyed Nasrallah, the Secretary General of Hezbollah, refused to negotiate with them. He said:

*“We are ready to start a dialogue with the weak Christians who have been taken for granted, and who desire coexistence and who did not commit crimes against the people. However, dialoging with Israel’s agents is like dialoging with Israel itself; it is as absolute a condition as it is regarding Israel”* (Noe, N., & Blanford, N. 2007: 31)

In the post-Taif agreement phase and after gaining military control in the areas that were previously under the Amal movement, political discourse of Hezbollah started to change in line with the state of stability Lebanon started to enjoy, and the subsequent requirements of this. At that time a debate took place within Hezbollah, this debate focused on a very central point, that of playing a part in the non-Islamic government. Several questions were raised:

*“From the stand point of Islamic law, was participation in a “non-Islamic” government legitimate? Should ideology bend to practical interests? And would Hezbollah, by its participation, be co-opted into a secular political system, thereby deserting its principles and Islamic vision?”* (Noe, N., & Blanford, N. 2007: 100)

Because of the organic relation between Hezbollah and the Iranian regime, answering these questions, and thus getting answers on whether participating is legitimate or not, was the mission of Iran’s supreme spiritual leader and legal authority. According to Norton, Sayyed Khamenei who succeeded the late Sayyed Khomeini “gave his blessing to the possibility of Hezbollah’s participation in Lebanese elections” ( Noe, N., & Blanford, N. 2007: 31). Hezbollah, wanting to gain both official and public support and hoping to outline political dialogue to its benefit, publicized through the Secretary General, Sayyed Nasrallah, on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1992, that the party would participate in that summer’s parliamentary elections (NOE, N., & Blanford, N. 2007: 101). Having made this decision, Hezbollah began to apply less aggressive political discourse inside Lebanon. In contrast, when concerning the outside world, Israel and America remained on the list of those places that should be attacked, Israel on account of its occupation in south Lebanon, and America on account of the reasons discussed earlier.

Hezbollah, under the new formula which ruled Lebanon after the Taif Agreement, managed to keep the Lebanese state absent from the southern part of Lebanon. Through a strategic relationship with Syria, and under the excuse of resisting Israel, Hezbollah was able to absorb the military decision in southern Lebanon. As a result of this, the Southern part of Lebanon remained away from any semblance of legitimacy, as the Lebanese army was not allowed to be present, and other security forces were not permitted to be effective in a way that would safeguard the prestige of the state. Due to these reasons, Hezbollah managed to control a large number of southern public opinion

through the adoption of a directed partisan discourse, with the result that the discourse of Hezbollah was accepted and heard, but not that of the legitimate state.

In other words, Hezbollah managed, on account of its absolute control of the south, politically, militarily and culturally, to regulate the moral compass of the people, and thus create a gap between them and the State. This resulted in the people starting to see that their salvation and their interests are not accomplished through the state, but through Hezbollah. Even those who opposed Hezbollah politically, were not able to express their opinions freely, as expressing their opinions would lead them to lose their interests, particularly since the government was not there to protect them. In the ten years between 1990 and 2000, Hezbollah fought two wars with Israel. These wars, although they occurred without the consent of the Lebanese government, did not change the southern public mood, and thus did not change the state of sympathy Hezbollah enjoyed. Of course, this reveals the impact of the political and mobilization discourse which Hezbollah applied, and which succeeded in firmly controlling the public opinion.

After 2000, the year that marked the withdrawal of Israel's troops from Lebanon, Hezbollah's political discourse continued to praise the party's arms. Hezbollah, not introducing any new strategy regarding its political and military activity, stuck to its previous position which supported the retention of their activities in southern Lebanon, under the command of their forces, and not under the command of the state. Addressing his followers, Sayyed Nasrallah, attempting to influence people's emotions, and to give the battle of existence with Israel a religious and ideological meaning and aspect, said:

*"We should preserve in our jihad, our struggle, and our resistance; we should be present on the field, never submit, and spread hope and optimism in the people's hearts. We have to redirect the battle's path towards that place where they [Israelis] will be the ones who scream in pain; these murderers are the killers of prophets, of messengers, of the innocent, and the poor, and therefore should be the ones to scream and retreat. This day will come, without a doubt."* (Noe, N., & Blanford, N. 2007: 276-277).

In July 2006, a devastating war took place between Hezbollah and Israel which led to thousands of deaths and injuries, huge losses that brutally damaged the Lebanese economy, and caused vast destruction to the Lebanese infrastructure. This war, in addition to the fact that it was neither authorized by the Lebanese state through its legitimate institutions nor by the people of Lebanon through a referendum, according to many happened at a time that best served the interests of Iran, which at the time was facing a UN Security Council discussion on proposed sanctions against it. One of the results of this war was that it dramatically increased the serious division in Lebanon that had already started to take shape in 2005 after the assassination of the former prime minister Rafic Hariri. Again, Hezbollah's political discourse which adhere the arms, did not change, but rather increased. Nasrallah, in his first public appearance after the July 2006 war with Israel, refused to disarm by stating that "'No army in the world will be able to make us drop the weapons from our hands".<sup>64</sup> In this statement Nasrallah was referring both to the UNIFIL forces and the Lebanese army which for the first time since the 1960's was allowed to deploy forces in south Lebanon. Moreover, in the same speech, Nasrallah who claimed a "divine victory" over Israel went as far as suggesting that some of the Lebanese politicians "might be guilty of treason, in reference to Israeli media reports claiming that Lebanese "governmental parties" had contacted Israeli officials asking them not to stop the military campaign against Hezbollah"(Leenders 2006). Treason discourse never stopped but became more direct. Later, Nasrallah and Hezbollah officials "accused the governing majority led by Prime Minister Fouad Siniora of failing to back it during the July war with Israel and of supporting U.S. and Israeli demands for its disarmament."<sup>65</sup>

This political discourse adopted by Hezbollah, divided the Lebanese society into two opposite camps, helped in spreading hatred and led to a few small doctrinal clashes. In May 2008, after the Lebanese government decision to dismantle Hezbollah's private communications network, Hezbollah decided to act decisively. Its militia militants were ordered to take over Beirut in an attempt to force the government to reverse its decision.

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<sup>64</sup> USATODAY world report. (2006). Hezbollah leader refuses to disarm in first public appearance since war with Israel . *USATODAY*- [Online]. 23/9.. Available from - [http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2006-09-22-mideast-nasrallah\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2006-09-22-mideast-nasrallah_x.htm). [Accessed: 15/8/2011]

<sup>65</sup> Arab Political Systems: Baseline Information and Reforms . Carnegie Resource Page, March 6, 2008/ Available from - <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/2008/03/06/arab-political-systems-baseline-information-and-reforms/2nn> [Accessed: 15/8/2011]

After Hezbollah militants succeeded in their mission, Nasrallah in one of his 2009 speeches “declared May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008, which saw deadly clashes in Beirut, a "glorious day" for the Resistance” (Sfeir 2009). He stressed that "we do not want the Lebanese to forget the May 7<sup>th</sup> events, because we do not want the foolish decisions made by the Cabinet on May 5<sup>th</sup> to be repeated.”<sup>66</sup> Insisting on keeping his militia arms, Nasrallah argued that there was “no contradiction between the existence of a powerful state and a strong resistance”(Sfeir 2009).<sup>67</sup> He continued: “The May 7<sup>th</sup> events safeguarded Lebanon's institutions and forced all Lebanese parties to go back to the [national] dialogue, which led to the election of President Michel Sleiman”(Sfeir 2009).<sup>68</sup> This discourse, when analyzed, implies a clear threat to the Lebanese, whether citizens or politicians or political parties. For it indicates that any decision to violate the public policy of Hezbollah will be faced by an armed attack. Moreover, the greatest clarification was given to the Lebanese government, that whenever it decides to extend its sovereignty it would be likely to be dropped.

In 2009 parliamentary elections took place in Lebanon. Before the elections Hezbollah, through its Secretary General, presented its vision for the post-election era and declared its readiness to rule Lebanon. Nasrallah criticized those who doubted their ability to run the affairs of the country saying: “The Resistance [Hezbollah] that defeated Israel can govern a country that is 100 times larger than Lebanon” (Sfeir 2009). He stated that “if we [Hezbollah] win the majority in the elections, and they [March 14<sup>th</sup> Forces] do not want to share power with us, we won't beg them”(Sfeir 2009). However, Hezbollah, having announced its readiness to govern Lebanon and to share power if they won the elections refused, after the results appeared not to be in their favour, to let the March 14<sup>th</sup> forces govern the country. Hezbollah insisted on the resulting national unity government which was called in Lebanon the “blocking third.” Therefore, Hezbollah prevented others from taking action which it used to deem legitimate for itself. But most significantly the result was that Hezbollah disrupted the democratic process in Lebanon. In other words, Hezbollah prevented the majority from ruling, and also prevented the opposition from opposing, and thus, the democratic process in Lebanon became

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid

<sup>67</sup> Ibid

<sup>68</sup> Ibid

sabotaged. Of course, the reason for this is Hezbollah's lack of trust in the majority, which can be inferred from its political discourse mentioned earlier in the chapter.

Since 2009, Hezbollah began to impose its terms on the successive governments. Thus no government has had the chance to run the country in a way that is contrary to that of Hezbollah's perception and its political discourse. In 2011, When the Lebanese government decided not to stop dealing with the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, and thus did not commit itself to Hezbollah's demands; the latter decided to flex its muscles again. Prior to the party minister's resignation from the government, Hezbollah deployed its soldiers in Beirut in an attempt to pressurise the government. Since the government did not back down under this pressure, Hezbollah decided to overthrow the government through the resignation of its ministers. Nasrallah, after the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) handed Lebanon's prosecutor arrest warrants for four members of his Party in connection with the February 14<sup>th</sup> bombing in 2005 that killed Mr. Hariri and 22 others in Beirut, said that "No Lebanese government will be able to carry out any arrests whether in 30 days, 30 years or even 300 years."<sup>69</sup> Earlier in 2010, He had stated that "Mistaken is the one who thinks that we will allow the arrest or detainment of any of our mujahideen [fighters]. We will cut off the hand that tries to get to them."<sup>70</sup>

In sum, Hezbollah's political discourse since its formation utilised two types of discourse. The first clearly lacked any recognition of the state, and the second conditionally recognized the state according to a policy whereby the armed organization plans it itself. This leads us to conclude that Lebanon after Taif was allowed to be stable as far as the Lebanese successive governments' were committed to Hezbollah's political discourse. In other words, the stability of Lebanon, even with weak institutions, limited the role and functionality of the army and the then inadequate sovereignty was subject to the acceptance of Hezbollah's political project, which required that Hezbollah remain a military force totally independent from the state and its institutions and one which is not subject to the law that regulates the role of any other political party in Lebanon. Moreover, Hezbollah's political discourse since its formation, implies a clear threat to

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<sup>69</sup><http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/07/02/155831.html>

<sup>70</sup> <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Politics/Nov/12/Nasrallah-We-will-not-allow-arrest-of-fighters.ashx#axzz1XDjdXfSr>

all those who reject it, whether the violator is the state, or the Lebanese citizens. In democracies, citizens have an obligation to be informed about public issues, to watch prudently how their elected political leaders and representatives practice their powers, and to express their own opinions and interests. In the case of Hezbollah, this role is not recognized and non-viable. Hezbollah's political discourse is equivalent to ultimate orders that cannot be discussed or criticized by the people. Therefore, citizens in this case become powerless and marginalized, and this evidently can never be the case in any functioning democracy. Of course, the growing strength of Hezbollah, which affirms not just the absence of any kind of democratic governance in Lebanon, but also the weakness of the state and its inability to fully exercise its duties and responsibilities, is not the blame of Hezbollah alone, but the defeatist and the complicit Lebanese state can also be considered to hold some responsibility. Several Lebanese leaders, who led the country after Taif Agreement, managed to turn attention away from Hezbollah's violation of the Lebanese laws, in order to guarantee that they stayed in power, and this makes them accountable also.

#### **b. Social institutions and services**

As argued earlier, the Lebanese state institutions were almost absent in south Lebanon, and particularly in the areas that were under the control of Hezbollah. The absence of the state institutions on a domestic level, in addition to the failure of the state on a national level to deliver jobs, social services, and education, enabled Hezbollah in particular, and other political parties in general, to appear to be the most effective alternative state institutions.

In their journal essay, *Hezbollah's Social Jihad: Nonprofits as Resistance Organizations*, Shawn Teresa Flanigan, Mounah Abdel-Samad argue that "One factor that helped Hezbollah to play a stronger political role in society and transform itself from a military actor into a political party was its provisions of healthcare and social services" (Flanigan S.T., & Abdel-samad M. 2009:123).



Hezbollah, the strongest and most complicated political party in Lebanon, managed to build a very well systematized social service sector (see figure 2). The sector consists of the Social Unit, the Education Unit and the Islamic Health Unit, which together make up an intricate network of service providers that Hezbollah's supporters mainly benefit from (Flanigan S.T., & Abdel-samad M. 2009). Unlike Hezbollah the political and military organization which is not legally registered yet, "many of Hezbollah's service organizations are legally registered with the Lebanese government as NGOs, a status that provides certain legal protections and eases collaboration with other organizations that may be wary of the "Hezbollah" name" (Flanigan S.T., & Abdel-samad M. 2009).

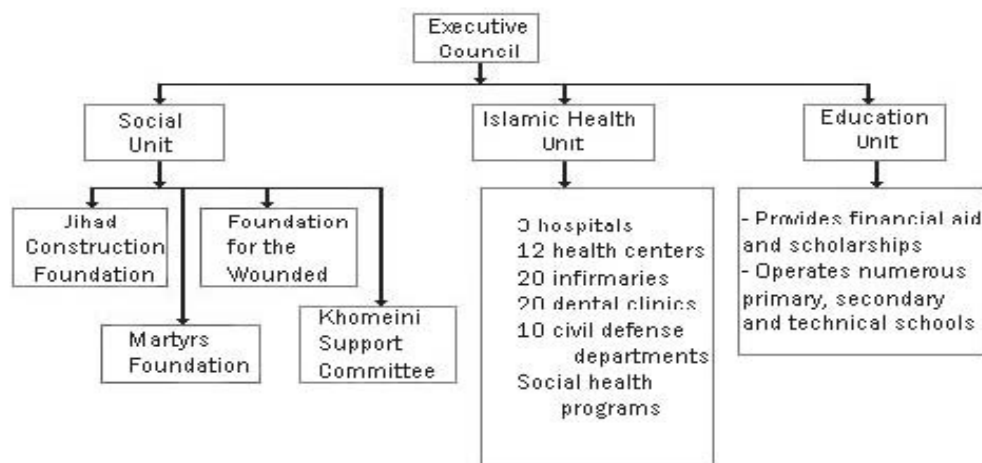
The Social Unit, according to Flanigan and Abdel-Samad, covers four organizations:

- 1- The Jihad Construction Foundation. This foundation, which is responsible for infrastructure construction, became over time and due to organized and solid effort, one of the most important NGOs in the country. Through this organization, Hezbollah pays reconstruction compensation to residents of southern Lebanon and Beirut's southern suburb for each and every war that takes place with Israel.
- 2- The Martyrs' Foundation. This foundation offers financial assistance, health and social support to the families of "martyrs" who have been killed in any combat whether with Israel or not, or in any military task.
- 3- The Foundation for the Wounded. This Foundation offers aid and assistance to those civilians who have been injured during Israeli attacks.
- 4- The Khomeini Support Committee. "Modeled after an institution in Iran" (Cammatt 2011), this committee deals with orphans and people with special needs.

Hezbollah which started providing health services to its community since 1983 (Harik 2005:83) has also established a very sophisticated Health sector. The Islamic Health Unit is the unit that meets Hezbollah's public health needs. "It operates three hospitals, twelve health centers, twenty infirmaries, twenty dental clinics, and ten defense departments" (Flanigan S.T., & Abdel-samad M. 2009). In addition to providing health service to Hezbollah's members and supporters, it provides health care to "low-income

Shiites and other low-income populations at little or no cost” (Flanigan S.T., & Abdel-samad M. 2009).

The third sector that Hezbollah managed to invest in is the educational sector. Hezbollah operates a number of primary and secondary schools that accommodate approximately 14,000 students (Flanigan S.T., & Abdel-samad M. 2009). Hezbollah’s focus on the education sector is not a coincidence. The schools Hezbollah operates enable new generations to become educated in accordance with its plan. In other words, it is a forum for Hezbollah to spread its ideology on the young generation in order to make them believe solely in its political agenda. In addition, Hezbollah’s unique and conservative religious sciences are taught in these schools. These sciences are not subject to state control at all. If the religious books that Hezbollah uses are looked at in depth, it will be revealed that a huge effort has been put in at the level of authoring and output, in addition at the level of the adoption of modern educational methods, demonstrated in the concentration and diversification of the content and the multiplicity of methods and means of education. Moreover, certain psychological factors can also be noted, ones which clearly aim to influence the student and raise his desire to learn, all in order to reproduce a supporting community that backs the ideology, approach and the life style Hezbollah tries to implement within the Shiite community. In addition to education, “Hezbollah provides low-income students with scholarships, financial assistance and books, buying in bulk and selling at reduced prices” (Flanigan S.T., & Abdel-samad M. 2009).



Adopted from FLANIGAN S.T., & ABDEL-SAMAD M. (2009). Hezbollah's social jihad: Nonprofits as resistance organizations. *Middle East Policy*. 16, 122-137.

**Figure 2 Social Service Sector**

Hezbollah pours an enormous amount of money into these sectors. According to Flanigan and Abdel-Samad, Hezbollah, by September 2006, Hezbollah “had spent \$281 million for rehabilitation and compensation following the 2006 Israeli bombardment of Lebanon, with reports that the party was prepared to spend \$300-400 million in compensation to the victims” (Flanigan S.T., & Abdel-samad M. 2009). These amounts of money are vast enough to verify that Hezbollah’s budget is not the type of budget that any political party can afford. In other words, such a budget is one that can only be afforded and allocated by states.

In short, the absence of the State’s institutions in the southern part of Lebanon and the southern suburb of Beirut was in favour to Hezbollah. The latter, in a publication from its NGO, portrays the armed organization services “as a gift to the loyal as well, although in this case the “loyal” being rewarded were not necessarily voters, but resisters” (Flanigan S.T., & Abdel-samad M. 2009). According to the aforementioned statement, it can be postulated that Hezbollah does not provide services to the Lebanese citizens who are loyal to their homeland, but to those citizens whom are considered as party members and thus are loyal to both the Party and its ideology and its political project. Health and social services which are usually the responsibility of the state became no longer part of its duties. At best, if the state is allowed to provide any service,

this service should happen through Hezbollah or any other political party. For example, if a citizen requires any care in a governmental hospital, he or she would need to approach his or her legislator or a party local official; not following this route is likely to result in not receiving any service that he or she requires. As Flanigan and Abdel-Samad reports, “This favor would be repaid with political loyalty from the sick individual and the extended family at election time” (Flanigan S.T., & Abdel-samad M. 2009). In sum, it can be argued that Hezbollah’s social and health institutions function as fringes to those of the state, but are even more effective and successful than those of the latter. Hezbollah, aware of the importance of these services, has been able to account for the loyalty of his supporters through the provision of these services. However, on the one hand, it may be argued that the failure of the State in this area is inevitable, but on the other, Hezbollah was able either to prevent the State from communicating directly with its citizens, or to position mechanisms that force the state to communicate with them but through Hezbollah’s local officials, so that the service if received by the citizen will not be considered as a state service but as a Hezbollah one. This, however, does excuse the ineffectiveness of the State in this area, for it did not adopt any mechanism to impose rules that would have prevented Hezbollah control. In other words, the State surrendered to the inevitable and chose not to weaken Hezbollah’s services. The fact that these services were undertaken by a political party and financed by a foreign country, Iran, rather than by the government’s responsible ministries, certainly “removes all doubt about the state’s capacity or desire to undercut the Party of God’s services in order to reduce its political appeal” (Harik 2005:85).

The next section will discuss the Military wing of Hezbollah, with particular reference to two points. The first part will focus on Hezbollah’s arms involvement in deadly operations on foreign forces that used to operate in Lebanon during the 1980’s, including the occupying forces of Israel. In addition, Hezbollah’s role in the civil war will be discussed. The second part will move on to consider the military role of Hezbollah after year 2000 which marked the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from Lebanon. Following this the section will discuss several points that are related to Military wing of Hezbollah. All these factors will lead to the conclusion of this section by regarding the organizational structure of Hezbollah and how its military wing operates.

### 6.3.2.2 Military Wing

#### (a). A Historical Review

Iranian funds and training led to the rapid growth of Hezbollah's military wing (Gambill & Abdelnour 2002). In the primary years of its establishment in the early 1980's this wing was committed principally to the removal of the American and European multinational force in Beirut. Following several brutal Hezbollah operations against MNF forces, perhaps most significantly the twin suicide bombings of October 1983 which resulted in the death of approximately 300 American and French servicemen, in 1984 MNF forces withdrew (Gambill & Abdelnour 2002). In addition to the violence against the American and French servicemen, Hezbollah also attacked the occupying Israeli forces which, on account of serious resistance, were forced to withdraw from central Lebanon in 1985.

Hezbollah, as discussed earlier, started its military activity in Lebanon in the early eighties engaging in acts that "constitute terrorism in its more precise and generally understood sense" (Norton 2009:77). In addition to the deadly operations, terrorist acts conducted by Hezbollah included the 1985 skyjacking of TWA flight 847 en route from Athens to Rome, and the 1988 kidnapping of the unarmed UN observer Colonel Higgins of the U.S. Marines, who was tortured and murdered (Norton 2009). Moreover, Hezbollah managed to conduct several kidnapping operations. The BBC reports it as follows:

*"As Hezbollah escalated its guerrilla attacks on Israeli targets in southern Lebanon, its military aid from Iran increased. The movement also adopted the tactic of taking Western hostages, through a number of freelance hostage taking cells: The*

*Revolutionary Justice Organization and the Organization of the Oppressed Earth,  
which seized Terry Waite.”<sup>71</sup>*

As well as the names mentioned previously in Chapter four, Hezbollah also kidnapped the Irish writer Brian Keenan. According to the Daily Mail newspaper, Keenan “was held in the Lebanese capital by Hezbollah terrorists during the country's civil war. For 1,574 days, he was kept in windowless cells, chained, beaten and blindfolded.”<sup>72</sup> John McCarthy, a British journalist, writer and broadcaster was also kidnapped by Hezbollah. According to the Independent, “McCarthy was released after spending 1,193 days as a prisoner of Hezbollah.”<sup>73</sup> Outside Lebanon, Hezbollah, according to The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) think tank, was accused of “two major 1990s attacks on Jewish targets in Argentina--the 1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy (killing twenty-nine) and the 1994 bombing of a Jewish community centre (killing ninety-five).”<sup>74</sup>

Furthermore, Hezbollah managed to be active in other areas of combat. The armed organization, according to Norton, “proved to be especially intolerant of the communist party. Dozens, if not hundreds, of party members were killed in a brutal, bloody campaign of suppression and assassination in 1984 and 1985” (Norton 2009:37). In addition to the Communist party, bloody battles took place between Hezbollah and the Amal movement. The battles aimed to extract the political and military decision in both the Southern suburb of Beirut and the South part of Lebanon. In these battles which led to thousands of casualties, the Amal movement, according to Norton, was badly defeated and Hezbollah’s attempts to roll back Amal influence succeeded in eroding Amal’s position (Norton 2009:44). In the southern suburb of Beirut, the violence resulted in defeating Amal utterly, which aided Hezbollah in becoming embroiled in a unique partisan model in the area; unlike in the Southern part of Lebanon where it took Hezbollah years to branch out to all towns and villages and impose its presence strongly.

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<sup>71</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/1908671.stm>

<sup>72</sup> <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-535370/18-years-Beirut-hostage-Brian-Keenan-returns-city-left-living-corpse.html>

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/media/john-mccarthy-labelling-people-as-terrorists-is-utterly-pointless-847670.html>

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.cfr.org/lebanon/hezbollah-k-hizbollah-hizbullah/p9155>

Hezbollah, after wresting the military decision in the Shiite areas, and after making sure that the Amal movement no longer represented a threat, directed its military activity entirely to fighting Israel. In 2000 Israel, on account of tremendous pressure from Hezbollah, withdrew from the Southern part of Lebanon after more than twenty years of occupation. The withdrawal of the Israeli troops did not convince Hezbollah to hand over its weapons. Hezbollah, however, insisted on keeping on the alert in order to repel any possible Israeli aggression. Indeed, Hezbollah who never trusted the Government, its institutions nor any of the political parties in Lebanon, once again, went to a war with Israel in 2006, after kidnapping two of its soldiers in South Lebanon. It was believed that the timing of the war served to corner Iran which at that time was facing a UN Security Council discussion on proposed sanctions against it. Lebanon suffered irreparable damage as a result of the war, with a great deal of lives lost and a break down in both its infrastructure and economy, but perhaps most significantly it also suffered a serious split in its society. Nasrallah recognizing the problem, “addressed the anger directed against his movement over the destruction and suffering”<sup>75</sup> that was caused by the July 12<sup>th</sup> war. He, trying to silencing the Lebanese, declared victory against Israel and promised to rebuild what was destroyed.

On May 7<sup>th</sup> 2008, Hezbollah “attacked west Beirut after the government announced the discovery of the Shiite party's surveillance network at Beirut's airport”<sup>76</sup>, in addition to a land-line telephone network that Hezbollah had installed in many parts of the country. The government, prior to Hezbollah’s attacks, took decisions to abort these surveillance and telecommunication networks. Nasrallah declared those government decisions as “an act of war” (Worth & Bakri 2008). During the attacks, the Lebanese army was no more than a spectator for its troops did not intervene to prevent Hezbollah from imposing its policy using the force of arms. After the attack, the government retreated and reversed the decisions taken. Following that, all parties went to Doha to discuss the problems and find solutions it. Professor Tarik Metri argues that what happened in Doha “had little to do with the norms of democracy” (Metri 2009). In fact, what happened was that an

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<sup>75</sup> <http://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/meb/MEB10.pdf>

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aJgv8fe22QIw&refer=home>

agreement was reached based on the effects of the events of the 7<sup>th</sup> May. This agreement produced a clear winner and a clear loser. The winner was evidently Hezbollah, who had pushed for the agreement to its satisfaction, and not the satisfaction of the Lebanese state and the legitimate ruling government. Thus, it is perhaps more accurate to say that the agreement was imposed by force and thus did not take into account any norms of democracy.

In the same year, Hezbollah used its weapons again domestically, shooting a Lebanese army helicopter. In that assault, the pilot, an army officer was shot and died. Hezbollah justified the accident by arguing that the helicopter was flying in the geographic scope of the resistance and thus the Hezbollah fighters thought that it was an Israeli helicopter. During the incident Hezbollah sent an indirect message to the Lebanese Army, which states that there are areas still under their arms influence and control, and thus, the Lebanese legitimate army is forbidden any access to it, and in the case the army does then they will be treated as an enemy. The Fighters who dropped the helicopter and killed the officer faced a mock trial, and were released weeks later.

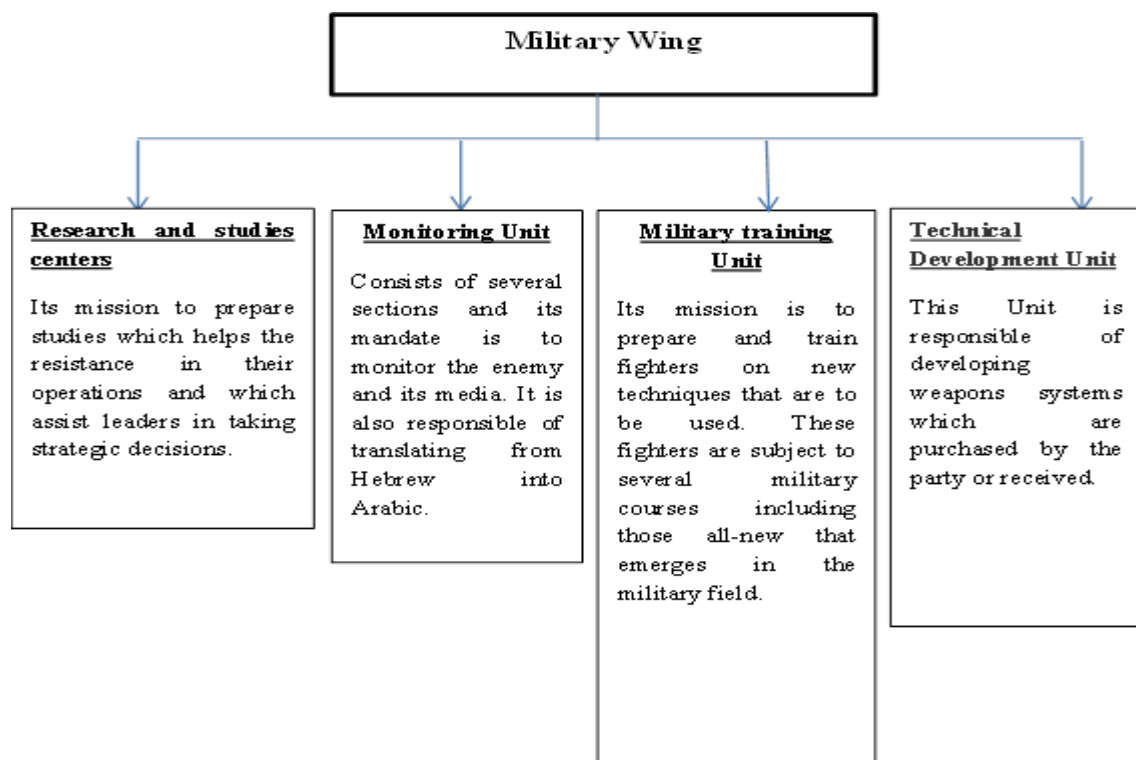
These activities summarize most of Hezbollah's history and their armed activities since its origination. But, how does this armed organization operate? According to the London-based, well-known daily newspaper, Asharq Al-Awsat, Hezbollah has a military wing with a dynamic hierarchy which allows smaller subdivisions to take decisions at crucial moments regardless of the size of the resolution.<sup>77</sup> The importance of this organization, according to the same newspaper, lies in the fact that it is the first armed organization that uses traditional military capabilities in the context of guerrilla warfare. Moreover, Elias Hanna, the strategic expert, argues that it is the first irregular armed faction that owns strategic weapons,. While Timur Goksel, the professor of political science at the American University of Beirut, and the former spokesperson on behalf of the UN forces in Lebanon, proclaimed to the same newspaper, that "Hezbollah fighters operate in groups of no more than 20 people that can hide their guns, but you

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<sup>77</sup> <http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&article=477294&issueno=10810>



cannot destroy their military organization”.<sup>78</sup> The military wing of Hezbollah, according to Asharq Al-Awsat, consists of several units. Each unit has its own specific task (see figure 3).

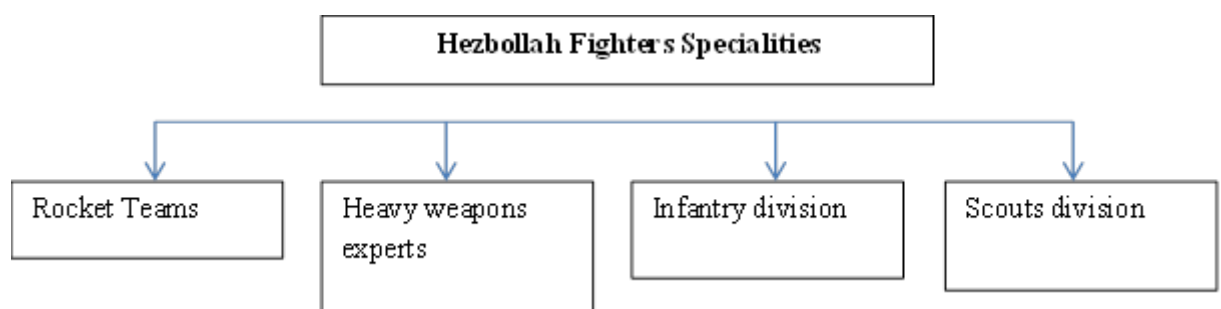


**Figure 3: Military Wing**

Furthermore, Hezbollah fighters, according to The Guardian, form a series of components – these components are created based on particular specialties, for example, heavy weapons experts, rocket teams, scouts, infantry and those that work on a part-time basis (See figure 4).

<sup>78</sup> Ibid

The Guardian reports that “Some units will be sent for training or operations for one, even two, years. Others continue to work or go to school. But even if you work your life is still Hezbollah...They call and that's it - you go. Maybe you tell your boss or professors you're going to Qatar or something for family reasons. But you never tell anyone what you're really doing.”<sup>79</sup>



**Figure 4: Hezbollah Fighters Specialities**

In addition to the above, Hezbollah created a War Information Unit. Its armed wing has formed the basis for parallel structures whose role it is to publicize Hezbollah’s actions. As early as 1984, Hezbollah has acknowledged the fact that it has and utilizes a War Information Unit, and that the principle role of this unit is to wage information of warfare which can be used directly against Israel. It does this by documenting every activity that Hezbollah militants conduct, in addition to recording their final testaments prior to “martyrdom” (Osipova 2011). During the last few years, especially between 2005 and 2009, this unit was responsible for partaking in a propaganda war against opposing political parties and leaders in the country.

The telecommunication private network discovered in 2008, that Hezbollah rolled out in most of Lebanon (see figure 5), represents a strategic arm of Hezbollah in its war with Israel in particular. Moreover, the network guarantees that Hezbollah’s leaders and fighters can contact each other without the risk of being monitored by the Lebanese

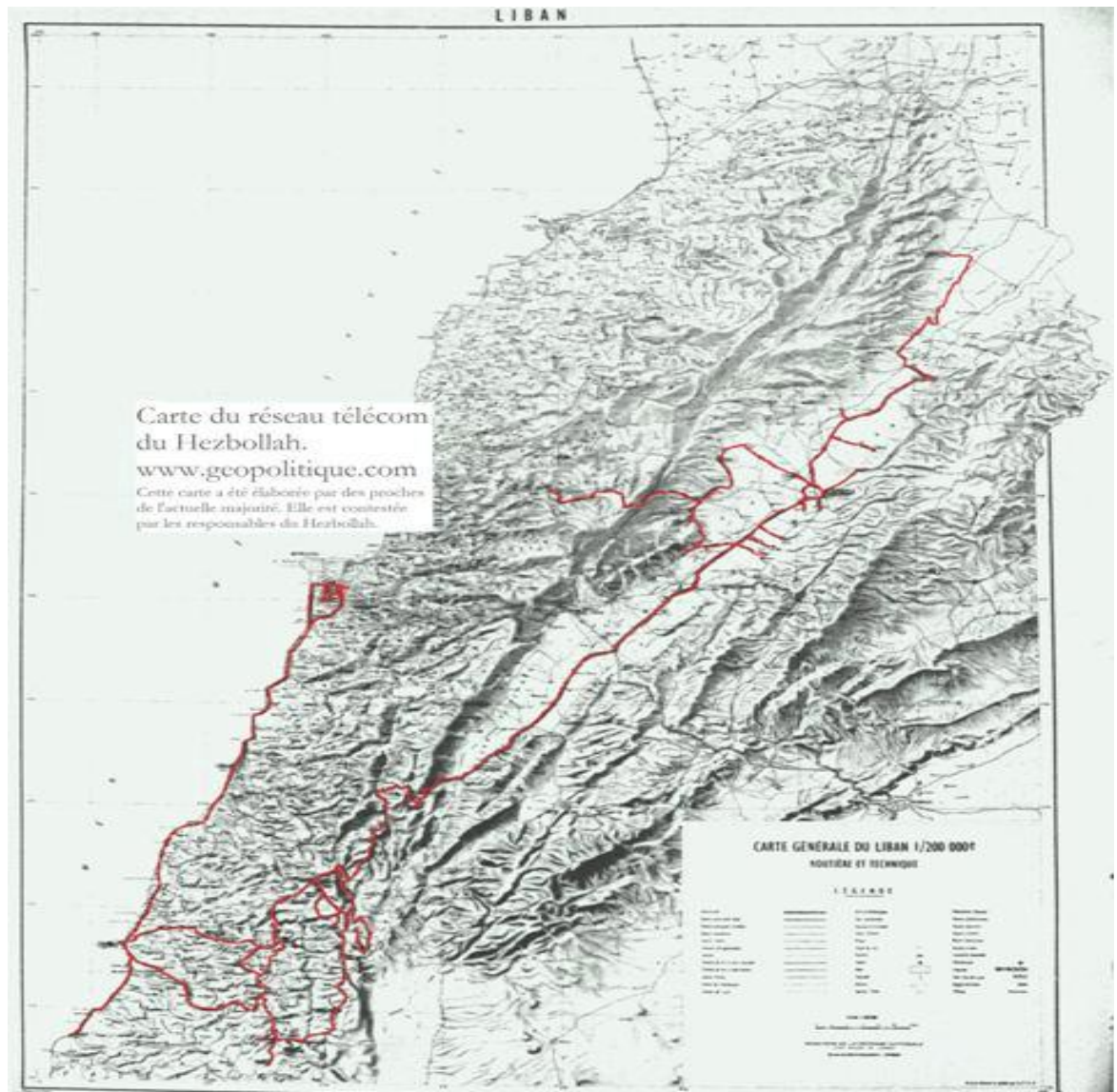
<sup>79</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/apr/27/israelandthepalestinians.lebanon>

authorities. Hezbollah, declaring the importance of this network, stated in 2008 through its Secretary General, that the declaration of the Lebanese state to stop the network from functioning is a declaration of war on Hezbollah, and that the hand that extends to the network will be cut down. In 2008, the Minister of telecommunication in Lebanon argued that Iran's telecommunication company controls Lebanon.<sup>80</sup> Hamadeh stated that the network connects the southern suburb of Beirut with the Southern part of Lebanon down to the area of South Bekaa. The map below shows in which areas Hezbollah's network was installed. This network, until now, has not been dismantled; indeed some information suggests that Hezbollah has started again the process of extending it to other Lebanese regions.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> <http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/11772>

<sup>81</sup> <http://www.nowlebanon.com/Arabic/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=306615>



**Figure 3 : Hezbollah Private Telecommunication Network (Adopted from [www.geopolitique.com](http://www.geopolitique.com))**

In short, the Military Wing of Hezbollah, in addition to its Sociopolitical Wing, shows that Hezbollah since its formation started gradually building the infrastructure of its own state. The militant activities that Hezbollah conducted over the years, before and after Taif agreement, demonstrate that they were no more than destabilizing activities which aim to weaken the Lebanese state, as weakening the Lebanese state offers Hezbollah the opportunity to strengthen its own presence. In other words, Hezbollah as a political and military force cannot reach its goals when the state itself is strong.

Otherwise, what is the meaning of establishing fringe institutions similar to those run by the state, like hospitals, schools, a telecommunication network and an army? And what is the significance of establishing these institutions in the light of a clear political conception which did not recognize the state in the beginning and later did not trust its governments and its political components?

The next section will shed the light on an important stage in recent history of Lebanon, which led to the establishment of a new political coalition that opposes Hezbollah. This broad political coalition adopted a political discourse and project that opposed the policies of Hezbollah, while supporting that which calls for the rebuilding of a strong Lebanese state. It called for disarming Hezbollah and restoring the prestige of the state and its institutions. However, this coalition which enjoyed a wide public support in Lebanon, was prevented from implementing its political plan, and thus failed miserably.

## **6.4 The March 14 Political Coalition**

The March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition is a political coalition that was not found through a mere twist of fate, but in fact there were several factors that contributed and led to its foundation. However, this political coalition did not only consist of newly established political parties (i.e. After Taif), but also of political parties that participated, like Hezbollah, in the Lebanese civil war of 1975. Moreover, this coalition, in addition to the political parties that have flocked in, is composed of civil society representatives, which are rarely allowed to be a part in the development of any political decision in Lebanon.

In the next section, this Coalition will be discussed, both the circumstances that led to its establishment, and the role that it played in the Lebanese political life after 2004. It is worth mentioning that Hezbollah was extensively discussed through many chapters in this research because of the fact that its establishment precedes in many years the establishment of the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition as a whole. Moreover, the political

confrontation that occurred in the last few years occurred between the March 14<sup>th</sup> Coalition as an interconnected unit with Hezbollah.

#### **6.4.1 The road map that led to its Establishment**

In 2000 the Israeli occupying troops left Lebanon after more than 30 years of occupation. But these troops withdrew beyond the Lebanese border only after an intense Lebanese national resistance that lasted for decades. However, the earlier mentioned circumstances,<sup>82</sup> that lead to a phase in which resistance operations in south Lebanon were seized by Hezbollah in the 1990's, resulted in giving gratitude to Hezbollah solely. After the Israeli troops withdrew, anxiety against the unending "presence" of the Syrian troops in Lebanon started to take place. In the same year, it was the Christian religious authority that was first to raise the voice against the continued Syrian "presence" in Lebanon. In his book David Hirst, *Beware of Small states* reports it as follows:

*"[After the Israeli withdrawn from South Lebanon], agitation against the continuing presence of the other intruder, Syria, began to make itself felt, the Maronites led it. Their Patriarch, Archbishop Nasrallah Sfeir, called on Syria to fulfill its long overdue obligation, under the Taif accord, to pull back its troops to the Beqa'a valley; then, more boldly, a conclave of Maronite Bishops lamented Lebanon's 'loss of sovereignty' and the 'hegemony imposed on all its institutions'." (Hirst 2011:298)*

After the Maronite Patriarch's several addresses, followed by the Christian Maronite bishops' call, the Druze leader, Walid Junblatt, who was close to the Syrian regime, also voiced the same demand. Later on, senior and junior politicians and journalists joined the same campaign and started expressing similar sentiments. Hirst mentioned it as follows:

*"More significant was the very similar position taken by Druze chieftain Walid Jumblatt, an official 'ally' of Syria, who in due course emerged as the opposition's*

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<sup>82</sup> See Chapter 6 section 6.3 and 6.3.2.1

*effective leader. Even more remarkable still than this coming together of the Two oldest and most rooted, but perhaps most reciprocally hostile, of Lebanese communities, were the Muslim voices, [some of which are Shi'a elites] mainly Sunni, now being raised in favor of a more balanced and equitable relationship with Syria”* (Hirst 2011:298).

At that period of time, a group of opinion leaders used to routinely meet with Bishop Joseph Bishara to discuss the era after the bishops' call and to foresee ideas for the next stage. Shortly after these constant meetings, the announcement of The Qornet Shehwan Gathering on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2001 occurred, from under the cloak of Patriarch Sfeir. This Gathering included politicians, intellectuals, and businessmen, mostly Christian ranging in ideology from the Centre-right to the center-left. The Gathering, which was looked at as the Political wing of Patriarch Sfeir, succeeded in becoming the principle moral compass of the Christians. The main points that the Gathering called for were as follows:<sup>83</sup>

- 1- Encouraging the Lebanese Authorities, who guard the constitution, to work on implementing its provisions. In addition, encouraging the authorities to restore the national sovereignty of Lebanon through applying the Taif Accord, particularly the term related to the redeployment of Syrian troops in preparation for a full withdrawal from Lebanon in accordance with a clear timetable.
- 2- Protecting democracy and setting it in motion on the basis that people are the source of all authorities. This could happen by securing the independence of the judiciary; respecting human rights and applying a new electoral law that provides a rightful representation. In addition, preserving public and individual freedom and the reducing the intervention of security agencies in all areas.
- 3- Moving forward to complete the comprehensive national reconciliation, ensuring the return of the exiled, releasing political prisoners and opening a new phase in the life of the Lebanese.

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<sup>83</sup> <http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&article=37760&issueno=8190>

The security agencies in Lebanon tried many times to confront the Gathering through an intensive campaign which aimed to intimidate it. The campaign reached its peak on August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2001, when the security agencies launched a number of raids and arrested hundreds of the supporters of the Gathering. The Gathering, despite all the pressure, continued at the same level of effectiveness and kept demanding the restoration of full sovereignty, including sending the Lebanese army to the Southern part of Lebanon.

From 2005 to 2011, Lebanon witnessed a number of significant successive events, including the issuing of the UN resolution 1559, which called for the withdrawal of the Syrian troops from Lebanon, a democratic election for a new president and the disarming of all Lebanese militias. Moreover, that era witnessed the establishment of a wide Islamic-Christian opposition against Syria and Hezbollah. It also saw the beginning of the assassinations era which started with Marwan Hamadeh, the former Minister of Telecommunication. Hamadeh, in an interview conducted by the Researcher, explains a lot of what happened during that phase:

*“I thought at that time in addition to [Rafic] Hariri and [Walid] Jumblatt, and others, - Of course Aoun and Geagea were still one in exile and the other in prison -, that the election of 2004 would be the chance to make a democratic change of the president and to remove some of this mandate (Syrian mandate) on Lebanon which had become very heavy. It was no more a friendly coverage of security in Lebanon. This mandate was getting into everything, no contract could be signed without the Syrians having their share, nothing, and the whole country was becoming a subdued western province of the Syrian regime. We started working on changing the president. We even thought that by getting a president friendly to Syria, but with other specifications than the ones of Emille Lahoud, we could save at least the essentials and basics of this Lebanese folk tale democracy which is unique in the region, and also stop the intelligence and military control over the political and economic life. Parallel to that, we had an intensive pressure from the Europeans with whom we have signed the corporation agreement in Brussels. Both from the French because of Mr. Chirac’s policy and from the Americans to obtain the implementation of the Taif agreement, which calls for the redeployment of the Syrian troops and then negotiate with the Lebanese government to agree on a withdrawal schedule under the pretext of a defence political agreement. So, they had put in place all the agreements but not the implementation of a withdrawal schedule. Anyway, what came into parallel with all the aforementioned factors was the slow bursing at the security council of a resolution*



asking Syria to redeploy out of Lebanon and the election of new president. Apparently, the Syrians reacted brutally to both issues. They didn't want to hear about the redeployment, nor about changing Emille Lahoud. So, in other words, they were planning to resist the resolution 1559, which wasn't yet adopted. . At that time, they [the Syrian regime] threatened [Rafic] Hariri, [Walid] Jumbalitt and even [Nabih] Berri – in their own way, but the others brutally, saying, 'we will destroy Lebanon upon your head if you don't elect Lahoud, Lahoud is us.' Later on, we went to the parliament, we voted against Lahoud, we got out of the government, I and my block resigned, and then we started creating gradually a real opposition movement, and it was limited at the beginning to the twenty-nine MPS' that have voted against the re-elections, Hariri wasn't a part of them, two or three of his block voted with us. It was what Annahar daily newspaper described, the honour list of twenty-nine MPS' who voted against the re-elections. On the 15 of September we published the first declaration. I and Basem Al Sabea [Former Shiite Minister] wrote it, asking for the immediate redeployment of Syrian troops. The pro-Syrian camp at once accused us saying that we were the creators of the resolution 1559, and then, on the 1st of October, as I was going out of my house, an explosion targeted me. I escaped by miracle but my bodyguard was killed. It was obvious for me, Hariri and Jumbalitt that the explosion was a direct message to Rafic Al Hariri and Walid Jumbalitt because I was their common friend and the bridge that links them with each other. But this explosion didn't push us to stop. We continued developing the opposition as we were approaching the election's deadline in May and June 2005. At that time we developed the first cell of the opposition into what we called the Bristol Gathering. In every meeting of the Bristol Gathering, more MPS and more political figures were joining us all over the country. Progressively, I remember personally, I was recovering from the explosion, fourteen surgeries, and Hariri got convinced that he should play it through the elections. It was obvious he had left the government, and the Syrians with the re-elected Lahoud constituted a pro-Syrian government, and they started to impose on us pro-Syrian candidates for the elections. Hariri refused and said no, we will head to the elections with no pro-Syria candidates among us. And you know, at the time there was no 14th of March yet, nor 14th of February yet, it was the Bristol gathering widening. Then, at one moment, as a preventive drastic action against the opposition, and when it became clear for them that the opposition will win the elections, Rafic Hariri was assassinated and killed. The goal was to let everybody in Lebanon panic about it and collapse. Moreover, everybody will be afraid and as a result nobody will go to the elections, and the Bristol gathering will disappear. They, they wanted to gather the government that should have resigned after such an assassination, to call on the parliament to adopt their electoral law. Business as usual, Rafic is killed. The reaction of the Lebanese people was different; it was the Cedar revolution, between February 14<sup>th</sup> and March 14<sup>th</sup> of 2005, when

*people started increasing in their gatherings. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of February, we had a very strong confrontation in the Parliament with the Government of Mr. Omar Karami. Our speeches were very harsh, mine particularly. In the afternoon Karami resigned and then after that the fall down of the Syrian hegemony over the country started. The decision to speed up the withdrawal was taken. We never thought they will withdraw, we thought they will make a redeployment only, but in fact, they withdrew later to the border and then outside Lebanon.”(Hamadeh 2009)*

Marwan Hamadeh in his argument summarizes an entire period that he witnessed himself. He was a prominent member of the opposition at that time and on the top of the list that was targeted. That phase was the one that chronicled the start of the era of political assassinations in post-Taif period. Moreover, it was the era that divided the country into two opposing camps, Hezbollah and its allies, March 8<sup>th</sup> on one side and the March 14<sup>th</sup> on the other.

The March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition was named after the mass anti-Syrian demonstration “on that date in 2005 in which over one million Lebanese converged on central Beirut to demand a withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon and an end to Syrian meddling in Lebanese political affairs.”<sup>84</sup> This demonstration was held as a reaction to the pro-Syrian demonstration on March 8<sup>th</sup> 2005. David Hirst describes the March 14<sup>th</sup> demonstration as follows:

*“This time, fully a million converged on Martyrs’ Square. That represented something between a quarter and a third of the entire population, ‘equivalent’, remarked Nadim Shehadi, a Lebanese Scholar at Chatham House, ‘to twenty million British demonstrators showing up at Trafalgar Square’. The day on which this took place, 14 March, became the name of the political coalition to which the Intifada gave birth, just as ‘8 March’ furnished the label by which Hizbullah and its friends identified themselves.”(Hirst 2011:309)*

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<sup>84</sup>Key Issues - March 14

<http://www.nowlebanon.com/Sub.aspx?ID=165&MID=31&PID=25&FParentID=23&FFParentID=3>

These demonstrations which were triggered by the assassination of the former Prime Minister Rafic Hariri caused Lebanon to progress from one stage to another. The anger of the one million people that gathered in 2005 fuelled the desire to move forward towards a free Lebanon. In due course, Saad Hariri, the former Prime Minister and the head of the parliamentary majority of 2005 and 2009, in an interview with the Researcher, claimed that “on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 2005, this huge demonstration that happened, the Cedar Revolution, was the day where the people said what they wanted, while the politicians didn’t understand what the people wanted” (Hariri 2008). It can be argued that Hariri’s criticism of the coalition to which he belongs held certain truths. After the parliamentary elections of 2005, “the first parliamentary elections since before Lebanon’s civil war without overt and overbearing Syrian control” (Yacoubian 2009), the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition started to drop many of the ‘peoples’ slogans on the table for negotiations.

Having spoken of the demonstrations and the reasons that agitated them, as well as the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition that, according to Hariri, didn’t meet people’s needs, it becomes pertinent to enter into a debate concerning the March 14<sup>th</sup> governance experience. Its political manifesto must also be discussed, especially regarding whether the manifesto has been successfully adopted or dropped, and also, whether the governance experience the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition have practiced has lived up to the level of the expectations found in their slogans.

#### **6.4.2 The March 14<sup>th</sup> Governance Experience: Failures and Successes**

After its establishment, the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition adopted the demands of the Lebanese citizens demands which, thereafter, shaped the philosophy of its political manifesto. Through the years this political coalition raised a number of slogans, some of which were short term while the rest were perpetual and strategic. Having divided the March 14<sup>th</sup> slogans into two parts, one should discuss the strategic goals that the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition raised and stuck to.

As for the permanent slogans and goals that the March 14<sup>th</sup> raised, they could be summarized as follows:

- 1- Implementing the Taif agreement provisions which are related to disarming militias, including those inside and outside the Palestinian camps.
- 2- Disarming Hezbollah.
- 3- Building a just, sovereign, democratic and modern state.

The March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition managed, through international support from the United Nations and local wide popular support gained – and increased with time- after the assassination of Rafic Hariri, to embrace the accomplishment of forcing Syria to withdraw its troops from Lebanon in April 2005. The 1559 resolution<sup>85</sup> of 2004 was the first UN resolution that explicitly asked Syria to withdraw its army from Lebanon. Moreover, it stressed in its content those factors that were mentioned in the Taif agreement. In other words, it was a complementary and supportive resolution to the provisions of the Taif agreement. However, the resolution remained a matter of intense debate in Lebanon and Syria, until the moment of Hariri's assassination. It can be argued that Hariri's assassination, gave the impetus for this resolution to be implemented. Moreover, on the one hand the credit goes to the 1559 resolution that called upon Syria to withdraw and leave Lebanon to establish its sovereignty over all of its land. On the other hand, the credit also goes to the Lebanese who engaged in demonstrations after the assassination of Rafic Hariri.

After the Syrian withdrawal, the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition started to sense the ecstasy of victory and began to act accordingly even with the people who had given that coalition the popular legitimacy of its political project. The rebelling people's mood in 2005, and

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<sup>85</sup> The 1559 UN resolution that was adopted on September 2, 2004, called upon Lebanon to establish its sovereignty over all of its land and called upon "foreign forces", i.e. Israel and Syria, to withdraw from Lebanon and stop their intervention in the internal politics of Lebanon. The resolution also called on all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias i.e. Palestinian Militias, to disband. The resolution also declared support for a "free and fair electoral process".

thus their moral compass, were focusing on one goal: building a Lebanese sovereign and independent state that would end all the effects of the thirty years of Syrian “presence” in Lebanon, and thus, isolate all political agendas, including that one of Hezbollah, that are contrary to building the sovereign and independent state. However, the coalition decided not to listen to the voice of the rebelling people, and went, abandoning one of its founders, the Free Patriotic Movement, to an electoral agreement, in some constituencies, with Hezbollah and its allies, called the quadruple alliance.

Following the decision to ignore the views of the rebelling people, several months passed before the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition reached an electoral agreement with Hezbollah. At this time, Samir Kassir, a member of the Lebanese opposition at the time, noticed and consequently mentioned, before his assassination on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 2005, the downward path in how the opposition was conducting its supporters. After the March 14<sup>th</sup> demonstration of 2005, the demonstration which led to the name of that opposition, Kassir wrote in his column in An-Nahar, the leading Arabic-language daily newspaper:

*“The demonstration - the event, nobody has said enough about it, or what should be said about it. It is the largest opposition demonstration in Arab modern history. In relative measurements, i.e., compared with the number of the population, it may be one of the largest demonstrations in the world history, and only can be compared with the French Revolution in the summer of 1789, also with the days of March and November 1917 during the two Russian revolutions, and with the Iranian revolution when people marched the streets in fall 1978 and winter 1979... This in itself requires a moment of meditation, and also requires a moment of modesty from all. What a third of the Lebanese did in that day was a confirmation that the independence state which the country is living in at the moment is greater than all those who contributed in assembling it and greater than those who sought to lead it... It is anomalous that the opposition waits more than two weeks to hold a public meeting in order to appreciate what happened on March 14<sup>th</sup> and deliver a tribute to the people who made this day. And it is anomalous to leave the mobilization of this day fade away, as if it is being said to the people: Well done, go back to your homes now, we will contact you if we need you again” (Kassir 2005).*

Kassir's words reveal how the campaigning people and millions of protestors were viewed as means to achieve a political victory by the opposition leaders, without any regard to their feelings, ambitions and efforts. In the same article, Kassir wrote about the power lust he started to see among the opposition members, asking for a new *Intifada* within the *Intifada* which establishes a modern state, a state of citizens.

Regarding the electoral deal which the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition made with Hezbollah in 2005 in some constituencies; one can see that this was when the March 14 launched its first strike on democracy and the democratic system it was hoping to build. Firstly, regardless of the fact that the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition colluded with an armed organization that violates Lebanon's sovereignty and Laws, and thus contradicted its own political slogans which call for freedom, independence and sovereignty and the building of a strong and just state, it entered a majority's sectarian coalition which marginalized minorities, and denied them any opportunity to be represented in the parliament. For example, the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition accepted and helped Hezbollah in monopolizing the representation of the Shiite community, at the time the Shi'a weren't, as a whole, supporting Hezbollah, but a reasonable percentage of them were supporting the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition. Moreover, this electoral deal, according to Hussein el-Husseini, the former speaker of the Lebanese parliament, was "a major blow to the Lebanese national composition, because it made the Christians feel that they were not partners in the decision."<sup>86</sup> This feeling, according to Hussein, had its implications in terms of political structure, and consequently led to a sharp political division among the Lebanese. In addition, it can be argued that the deal was one that took place between status quo forces, those forces who had chosen to replace the constitution and use the agreement as their organizational reference to regulate power-sharing.

After being granted the parliamentary majority in the elections of 2005, the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition broke its temporary electoral alliance with Hezbollah, and swept to power on a wave of both popular anger and hope. The March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition which represented at the time the parliamentary majority formed and "dominated the cabinet," (Hirst 2011:313)

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<sup>86</sup> <http://annaharkw.com/annahar/Article.aspx?id=283886&date=15042010>

but instead of starting to apply the new values and principles it called for, were equivalent to a second strike against democracy and democratic values. The March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition, as a parliamentary majority, decided not to act as a majority, and thus, decided not to go for a majority rule, a rule which is often listed as a characteristic of democracy. However, the coalition went back to the same old Lebanese style: applying the confessional system in its worst form, through asking the minority to participate in the cabinet as the legal representatives of their sects. In other words, it contributed in bringing into being a government which looked like a board of party members' delegates that represent their sects.

Accordingly, that cabinet of 2005 marked the era of Hezbollah's direct participation in the Lebanese government, and thus, marked the era of its direct involvement in the Lebanese politics through a cabinet. The Syrian troops' "presence" in Lebanon was used to exempt Hezbollah from this involvement, but after its withdrawal, Hezbollah found the need to participate directly and "insert itself more strongly into the Lebanese power structure" (Hirst 2011:313). Naim Qasim, the deputy secretary-general of Hezbollah, comments on this need to change by arguing that Syria's withdrawal "made us directly responsible for providing the domestic protection in a better way than before" (Hirst 2011:313). Presumably, if it is argued that the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition did the right thing in containing Hezbollah in the cabinet, then, Qasim's statement reveals otherwise. It reveals that the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition did not accept Hezbollah's participation in the cabinet on a basis that corresponds to the slogans it raised and stated which, as mentioned earlier, call for the building of a democratic, sovereign and independent state. But rather it demonstrates that Hezbollah's participation occurred according to Hezbollah's own conditions, and thus, did not occur in accordance with the parliamentary majority's conditions. It also suggests that Hezbollah's participation was not aiming for the development of the state, but its intention, according to Qasim, was to protect Hezbollah as an armed organization. The agreement between Hezbollah and the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition, whose pompous manifestation appeared in the cabinet's opening policy statement, a statement which "praised the 'resistance' as a 'natural, honest expression of the Lebanese people's national right to liberate their land'," (Hirst 2011:313) confirms this argument. As was discussed earlier in this chapter, Hezbollah, starting from the early 1990's, managed to seize resistance operations, with the result that a strong bond occurred between Hezbollah and the resistance. In other words,

Hezbollah, in the Lebanese political literature, became the resistance, and the resistance became Hezbollah. Accordingly, this means that the cabinet of 2005, when in its opening policy praised the resistance, then, automatically, it praised Hezbollah.

The step carried out by the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition, which legitimized the participation of both the majority and the opposition together in one government, had a disabling effect on the role of the parliament, where the government is held accountable for its decisions. In other words, when a cabinet is formed, it does so on the basis that it is a collective decision-making body, and its members, when making major decisions, do so collectively, and are therefore, collectively responsible for the consequences of these decisions. The opposition which takes place in the parliament, in this case fails the task of keeping the cabinet accountable through the means of monitoring, examining and criticizing the cabinet's policies and decisions. In the case of the 2005 cabinet, this theory was abolished, as the majority and the opposition were in the same cabinet taking decisions collectively, therefore, the role of the opposition in monitoring, examining and criticizing the cabinet's policies and decisions in the parliament was eliminated. However, the "unnatural marriage" (Hirst 2011:313) between the majority and the opposition did not last for long. A few months after the cabinet's formation, particularly on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2005, a car bomb killed the plain-spoken Lebanese journalist MP Gibran Tueni. This issue sparked a controversy in the cabinet and resulted in the cabinet no longer being a collective decision-making body. Consequently, a crisis in the cabinet loomed after Hezbollah ministers, "protesting a violation of the consensus rule, staged a walkout from the cabinet" (Hirst 2011:314). In doing this Hezbollah visibly demonstrated its disapproval at the decision of the Lebanese cabinet to officially request that the UN form a quasi-international court which would convene both inside and outside Lebanon, in order to try those who had been accused in the assassination of former premier Rafik Hariri, in addition to the request that the UN probe be expanded so that it might incorporate all the murder attempts and assassinations in Lebanon.<sup>87</sup> After this step, a war of words broke out between the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition on the one side, and Hezbollah and its allies on the other. The March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition returned to 'state' speeches, arguing that the Hezbollah 'state-within-the-state'

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<sup>87</sup> <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Politics/Dec/13/Cabinet-agrees-to-international-court-as-Amal-and-Hizbullah-stage-walkout.ashx#ixzz1YBc7PrC6>



should stop, while Hezbollah, insisting on sticking to its arms, refused the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition's speech. For example, Walid Jumblat, the Druze leader, and the 'shadow leader' of the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition at the time, expressed the majority's desire to see a one central State that hasn't got any other state within it. David Hirst puts it as follows:

*"[After Hezbollah's ministers walk-out from the Cabinet], among the '14 March majority' it was Jumblat, the great 'prestidigitator' of Lebanese politics, who now turned most strongly against the organization he had hitherto sought to accommodate. The 'war of liberation' was over, he said, Nasrallah should turn in his weapons and dismantle his 'state-within-a-state', for 'no country in the world allows an irregular militia to take law and order duties along with its regular forces'. But Hizbullah would have none of it. Had not Nasrallah, in a rousing speech with this self-same Jumblat at his side, already warned: 'If anyone tries to disarm the resistance, we will fight him the way martyrs fought in Karbala' and 'consider any hand that tries to seize our weapons an Israeli hand, and cut it off?'" (Hirst 2011:314)*

This discourse, inevitably, did not persuade Hezbollah that handing over its arms was a necessity was being submissive to the state's rule of law. However, in 2006, it led to the conviction of all parties to sit around a dialogue table to resolve the outstanding issues. Through the acceptance of a dialogue outside the state's institutional framework, the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition, again, embarked a new institutional decline. In other words, any political dialogue, in any country, which aims to resolve outstanding issues, usually takes place in democratically elected institutions .i.e. the Parliament, while in the case of Lebanon, the 'national dialogue' by-passed the elected institutions, and happened between litigants political leaders. The March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition, whether forced or not, erred in accepting this form of dialogue, because by doing so, it accepted laying a new political norm which says that any political problem, that cannot be solved according to the Lebanese laws within the democratically elected institutions, can be carried over to outside these institutions in order to reach a settlement. Moreover, the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition, which was by then heading the cabinet, bucked the slogans it raised, which called for the building of a sovereign, independent and democratic state, as building a sovereign state requires enforcing the law and not going for a dialogue with an armed organization that is violating the state's sovereignty.

The ‘national dialogue’ of 2006, which indicated and confirmed the absence of the poorly operating democratic institutions, did not lead to a result which upheld the state’s rule of law, nor indeed what the Taif agreement and the 1559 resolution had called for. However, it led to Hezbollah sticking once again to its argument. David Hirst puts it as follows:

*“During a so-called ‘national dialogue’ between the country’s major leaders, about a ‘national defense’ strategy and other contentious issues that were threatening to tear the country apart, it argued that Hizbullah itself, not the national army, should assume the principle burden of defense, since it, and it alone, had the capacity to ‘deter’ Israeli aggression.” (Hirst 2011:315)*

The promise of stability on the border with Israel, which was popular at the time that Nasrallah gave one of the dialogue sessions, did not last for long. In the same year, particularly on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 2006, Hezbollah “guerillas captured two Israeli soldiers in a cross-border raid, triggering the first Israeli land incursion into the country since 2000.”<sup>88</sup> This capturing operation, which Hezbollah conducted without any coordination with the Lebanese government and the national security forces, ignited a thirty-three day war between Hezbollah and Israel. Nasrallah, showing regret after the war, said in a TV interview “that he would not have ordered the capture of two Israeli soldiers if he had known it would lead to such a war.”<sup>89</sup> Nasrallah’s argument came after some observers thought that the war was to benefit the cornered Iranian regime. They understood that the war of 2006 was a proxy war and that “Hezbollah’s missiles were to deter Israel, the United States or anyone else from attacking Iran’s nuclear facilities” (Nakhleh 2007). According to Hany T. Nakhleh, the Lieutenant Colonel in the Lebanese Army, the war between Hezbollah and Israel was an indirect Iranian “show of force” (Nakhleh 2007). He continued that the Iranian regime would try to benefit from this show of force to “influence western interests and move forward in its nuclear program”

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<sup>88</sup> Hezbollah seizes Israel soldiers – BBC - Wednesday, 12 July 2006  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/5171616.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/5171616.stm)

<sup>89</sup>Nasrallah: "If I Had Known ..." - 8/27/2006 – cbs news  
<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/08/27/world/main1936949.shtml>

(Nakhleh 2007). The position of the March 14<sup>th</sup> Coalition, which was leading the Lebanese government at that time, was not far away from adopting the argument which said that Lebanon became a mere hostage of Iranian politics, and that the war of 2006 happened according to the desire of the Iranian regime. Moreover, “they had long charged that of all the rights of a sovereign state which Hezbollah has effectively usurped the most fundamental, and dangerous, was the right to decide on matters of war and peace” (Hirst 2011:339). According to the Economist which reported at that time the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition’s point of view from the war:

*“[The] ‘March 14th movement’, blames Hizbullah for having started a war that killed 1,200 Lebanese, scorched dozens of villages and shattered much of the country's infrastructure. Rather than deterring Israel, said a March 14th statement, the Shia party's weapons had turned Lebanon into ‘a battleground used by Iran to improve its bargaining position with the international community and by the Syrian regime to exercise its hegemony over Lebanon.’”<sup>90</sup>*

This position that the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition took made Hezbollah sharpen its mistrust discourse against the Lebanese government, accusing the latter of conspiring against the resistance. However, the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition, and thus, the Lebanese government, achieved a partial success, for the benefit of the Lebanese state. The success was achieved through the 1701<sup>91</sup>UN resolution which stopped the war. The importance of the resolution lies in its emphasis on several factors, including the one related to the deployment of the Lebanese Army Forces in southern Lebanon. Additionally, it reiterated what the Taif agreement and the 1559 resolution called for regarding the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon. Moreover, it called upon the Lebanese government to exercise its full sovereignty on all Lebanon’s territory. In some of its provisions, the resolution called for:

*“[The resolution] calls for a full cessation of hostilities based upon, in particular, the immediate cessation by Hizbollah of all attacks and the immediate cessation by*

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<sup>90</sup> Lebanon after the war - Hizbullah's new offensive. The Economist- 2006 - <http://www.economist.com/node/7912789>

<sup>91</sup> The 1701 was unanimously approved by the United Nations Security Council on 11 August 2006.

*Israel of all offensive military operations. [The resolution] emphasizes the importance of the extension of the control of the Government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory in accordance with the provisions of resolution 1559 (2004) and resolution 1680 (2006), and of the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords, for it to exercise its full sovereignty, so that there will be no weapons without the consent of the Government of Lebanon and no authority other than that of the Government of Lebanon ... [The resolution calls for the] Full implementation of the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords, and of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), that require the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon, so that, pursuant to the Lebanese cabinet decision of 27 July 2006, there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than that of the Lebanese State ... no foreign forces in Lebanon without the consent of its Government ... no sales or supply of arms and related materiel to Lebanon except as authorized by its Government”<sup>92</sup>*

In addition to the fact that the resolution was released to protect Lebanon from Israel through stopping its military operations, the resolution was clear in showing that it was also released to satisfy another job: protecting Lebanon from Hezbollah. It is clear that the resolution requested directly that Hezbollah, not the Lebanese government, stop its attacks, which reveals two hidden truths which the United Nations took into consideration: firstly, it implies that the group which triggered the conflict from the Lebanese side was Hezbollah and not the Lebanese government. Secondly, it shows that the Lebanese government was not the party that demanded the end of military operations, but Hezbollah through the Lebanese government. Moreover, the above quotation from the resolution shows that Hezbollah suffered a new crisis of legitimacy. In contrast, it emphasized the State's right to establish its legitimacy, with the help of the United Nations, on the entire national territory, including those under the influence of Hezbollah. Furthermore, the resolution, as the above quotation demonstrates, stresses the assertion of the movement's authority, and thus emphasizes the need to restore the rule of law in south Lebanon, by the expulsion of Hezbollah militants from the area of operations of the Lebanese army and international forces, and the importance of stopping weapons smuggling from Syria into the Lebanese territory in order to ensure stability in the region. Through these assertions, the international community delivered a message to Iran and Syria that they should stop using Hezbollah as their proxy in

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<sup>92</sup>Security Council SC/8808 - Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

Security Council - 5511th Meeting (Night) - <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8808.doc.htm>

Lebanon. Also, these assertions demonstrated that the resolution aimed to provide protection to the people of Lebanon, particularly to those in the south and to Lebanon itself as well, the country which suffered from the existence of illegal weapons since the signing of the previously discussed Cairo Agreement of 1969, an agreement which led to the abandonment of the Lebanese authorities and thus its sovereignty in parts of the country's territories. The most important part of the resolution was its emphasis on the previously discussed Taif agreement as a base for extending the state's authority and sovereignty all over the Lebanese territory, including the southern part, where there should be no illegitimate weapons, but only those of the legitimate state.

This resolution, which was approved by Hezbollah, marked a step forward toward the consolidation of the state's authority. Moreover, the Lebanese government of 2006, headed by the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition, achieved a victory which enabled the state to work logically. However, Hezbollah, after the implementation of the resolution, decided to respond in retaliation. Nasrallah, the Secretary General of the armed organization, while seeing, "the southern villagers fleeing in packed cars with their possessions strapped on top flutter" (Koteich 2010), returning back to their villages, insisted on projecting his armed organization as the victor of its confrontation with Israel. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of August 2006, Nasrallah, after thanking "God for what he called 'a divine, historic and strategic victory'"<sup>93</sup> over Israel, told the crowds that "his guerrillas will not surrender their weapons until a stronger Lebanese government is in place — including 20,000 rockets his group claims to still have after its 34-day war with Israel."<sup>94</sup> In the same speech, and also in later speeches, he announced that the Government of the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition, which is western-backed, must leave. David Hirst portrays it as follows:

*"The western-backed, '14 March majority' government, he now proclaimed, had to go. It was unfit to rule. A 'national unity government' should take its place, a government that would rebuild Lebanon as 'just, strong, capable, honorable and*

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<sup>93</sup> Hezbollah chief Nasrallah refuses to disarm - In first appearance since war, leader hails 'divine victory' over Israel- [http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/14953453/ns/world\\_news-mideast\\_n\\_africa/t/hezbollah-chief-nasrallah-refuses-disarm/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/14953453/ns/world_news-mideast_n_africa/t/hezbollah-chief-nasrallah-refuses-disarm/)

<sup>94</sup> Ibid

*resisting state' which could 'truly protect' its citizens with arms, power, reason, unity, organization, planning and national will'; a 'proud and noble' state which rejected 'foreign tutelage or hegemony', and a 'clean' state that banished 'theft and waste'...[Nasrallah believed that] under this state, this authority, this regime ... any talk of surrendering the resistance weapons means keeping Lebanon exposed to an Israel that can bomb, kill and kidnap as it wants, and plunder our land and waters ” (Hirst 2011:383-384).*

Nasrallah, fulfilling his promise to topple the 'western-backed' government, appeared a few months later on Hezbollah's Al-Manar television, and ordered a peaceful sit-in protest in Beirut to topple the Lebanese government. According to the New York Times, "Hezbollah and its political allies planned [on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2006] to occupy the center of this city ... with a massive sit-in that would last as long as it took to force the government to resign" (Slackman 2006). Nasrallah, who ceased to appear in person after the war of 2006, continued saying in his address that Lebanon, because of its structure, diversity, nature and confidentiality, "cannot be ruled by one single party and cannot be ruled by a specific coalition to solve its problems, especially in light of the internal difficult conditions, which are regionally more difficult and internationally very dangerous" (Slackman 2006). Nasrallah's speech demonstrates that, at that period of time, he did not recognize the results of the 2005 parliamentary elections, which produced a parliamentary majority and minority. As discussed in an earlier chapter, democracy, on a wider scale, means something deeper and broader than sheer elections, however, elections constitute an essential and important part of democracy. Consequently, it can be argued that Nasrallah since he rejected the outcome of the 2005 elections is thus conspiring against an essential part of democracy and hence encouraging a breakup in the country.

The next day Hezbollah, as its leader promised, staged a mass protest and sit-in in the center of Beirut, meters away from the complex which houses the government's offices. Hezbollah partisans, setting up water tanks, portable latrines and distributing sandwiches<sup>95</sup> to those camped out, hoped to oust the elected March 14<sup>th</sup> government and

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<sup>95</sup>Hezbollah supporters pitch tents in Beirut- 12/2/2006 4:19:14 – MSNBC  
[http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/16006125/ns/world\\_news-mideast\\_n\\_africa/t/hezbollah-supporters-pitch-tents-beirut/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/16006125/ns/world_news-mideast_n_africa/t/hezbollah-supporters-pitch-tents-beirut/)

get a “clean government”.<sup>96</sup> Seemingly, the “victorious” Hezbollah, by such a move, wanted to draw the attention elsewhere. Hezbollah wanted to ease the burden of the disaster that befell in Lebanon after Hezbollah’s war with Israel. Moreover, Hezbollah wanted to delude the Lebanese society and government, Israel, and the international community, by demonstrating that a victory over Israel, requires another kind of victory; an internal victory whereby they would attain the reins of power in Lebanon.

The March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition, which held the parliamentary majority at that time, was ready to defend its elected government. Fouad Siniora, the Prime Minister during that course of incidents, argued that “this government will continue as long as it enjoys the support and backing of the constitutional institutions in the country, most importantly Parliament.”<sup>97</sup> The March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition represented by Siniora, relying on the parliamentary majority it had been granted in 2005, “called on Hezbollah to resume negotiations over its demand for a bigger role in the government.”<sup>98</sup> Siniora stressed that “Taking to the streets will not lead us anywhere [and] there is just one way to solve our problems and that is to sit behind a table to discuss all our differences ... Other than that it is a waste of time, waste of resources and waste of opportunities.”<sup>99</sup>

The March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition, defending its political agenda, remained steadfast to its position regarding the popular mobility that Hezbollah was leading which had no parliamentary basis to support it. However, at the same time, the cabinet led by the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition, was committing serious mistakes, which led to events which appeared to be happening for the sake of satisfying Hezbollah. Firstly, the government, submitting to several threats and *Fatwas* that were originated by several clerics related to Hezbollah, did not make any move towards appointing alternative ministers instead of those who had dropped-out. Secondly, the government failed to establish a link with

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<sup>96</sup> Daily mail- Crowds rally for Hezbollah-protest targeting Western-backed Lebanese government- 12:40 01 December 2006- <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-419883/Crowds-rally-Hezbollah-protest-targeting-Western-backed-Lebanese-government.html>

<sup>97</sup> Hezbollah supporters pitch tents in Beirut- 12/2/2006 4:19:14 – MSNBC  
[http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/16006125/ns/world\\_news-mideast\\_n\\_africa/t/hezbollah-supporters-pitch-tents-beirut/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/16006125/ns/world_news-mideast_n_africa/t/hezbollah-supporters-pitch-tents-beirut/)

<sup>98</sup> Ibid

<sup>99</sup> Ibid

the southern citizens after the war of 2006. It acted in a manner which indicated that these citizens are attached to Hezbollah, and thus, the latter alone has got the right to regulate their affairs. The financial compensation that the government was supposed to pay to those affected by the 2006 war was not going through proper official channels, but through channels managed and directed entirely by party officials belonging to the Amal movement and Hezbollah, which gave the impression that Hezbollah was paying.

From December 2006, the date that marked the beginning of the sit-ins, until May 2008, the date which marked a forced resolution, the political situation in Lebanon remained rigid. On the one hand, the Lebanese government stood firm and stuck to its position, judging Hezbollah's action as a tantamount to an attempt *coup d'état* (Hirst 2011), while on the other hand Hezbollah continued its sit-in in downtown Beirut, which forced many businesses to close down. This situation deteriorated into clashes between both supporters; the worst of these clashes was in 2007 which left 7 dead and 250 injured (Hirst 2011). Moreover, Hezbollah's campaign coincided with new assassinations including those of ministers and MPs. It was believed at that time that these assassinations were happening in order to decrease the majority's number of MP's, which consequently enabled the minority to weaken people's confidence in the government, and hence bring them down.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2008, the Lebanese government decided, after the discovery of a private telecommunication network owned and run by Hezbollah in most parts of the country, to outlaw and dismantle it. The Lebanese government, after an overnight meeting, considered the telecommunication network of Hezbollah to be an illegal one and one which constitutes an assault on the sovereignty of the state as well as public money. The government called for the launch of criminal prosecutions against anyone found involved in the process, whether individuals, parties, organizations or companies. Moreover, the government rejected the argument which states that the protection of Hezbollah requires the establishment of such a network. The government also decided to follow-up the issue of the CCTV cameras that were found directed to the main runway of the airport, and which the government believed to have been installed by Hezbollah. The government, considering these cameras as a threat and as a violation to



Lebanon's sovereignty, decided to reassign the pro-Hezbollah Beirut airport's security chief because of his failure to meet his responsibilities.<sup>100</sup>

After announcing these resolutions, an alleged civil disobedience movement, organized by Hezbollah and its allies, took place which led to the shutting Beirut's airport and major roadways.<sup>101</sup> Subsequently, Hezbollah's Secretary General, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, held a press conference and said that "the Lebanese government's decision to close down its private telecommunications network was a "declaration of war"". <sup>102</sup> Publicizing that a totally new era is being embarked, Nasrallah "warned that the move was "for the benefit of America and Israel" and vowed to "cut off the hand" that tries to dismantle it."<sup>103</sup> Accusing the government of being a "gang", Nasrallah argued that "Whoever declares war against us and who launches a war against us even if he's our father or brother, or just a political opponent, we have the right to confront him to defend ourselves, to defend our weapons, to defend our resistance and to defend our existence."<sup>104</sup> After Nasrallah's press conference, "the protest movement turned into a deliberate and well-planned operation to take over West Beirut."<sup>105</sup> According to the International Crisis Group, Hezbollah soldiers in addition to those of the Amal movement, the militia headed by the Speaker of the Parliament, with far greater equipment, training and self-restraint, took control in few hours of west Beirut, the section of the capital that includes government Head Quarters. In addition to attacking Beirut, Hezbollah managed to strike an assault on Mount Lebanon in which the Druze Leader's Walid Junblatt's Supporters are based. Moreover, the assault reached south Lebanon, wherein "Sayyed Ali al-Amin, the grand old man of Lebanese Shi'ism" (Taheri 2006) was attacked and his offices and residence were seized. Hezbollah's assault cannot be described as a sectarian assault, but as a political one since it involved leaders from different sects. In other words, Hezbollah was targeting its opponents for

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<sup>100</sup> Now Lebanon — Kararat Mifsaliya li Majlis Al-Wozaraa -  
<http://www.nowlebanon.com/Arabic/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=41071>

<sup>101</sup> Lebanon: Hizbollah's Weapons Turn Inward - Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°23, 15 May 2008

<sup>102</sup> BBC- Hezbollah warns cabinet of 'war' - Thursday, 8 May 2008 17:17 UK -  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/7389507.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/7389507.stm)

<sup>103</sup> Ibid

<sup>104</sup> Ibid

<sup>105</sup> Lebanon: Hizbollah's Weapons Turn Inward - Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°23, 15 May 2008

just being opponents, whether Sunni, Shia, Druze, etc. Furthermore, the armed clashes in Beirut in which Hezbollah was involved did not take place because the second part was Sunni, but rather, because it was an armed defender of the government. The aforementioned events flout several allegations which state that Hezbollah's assaults were confined to a certain sect .i.e. a sectarian one.

During the violence in May, Hezbollah's opposing Media institutions were attacked; "the Future News station was shut down, the station's former headquarters, which were serving as an archive, were torched to the ground, and the offices of Al-Mustaqbal newspaper were attacked, burned and shut down"(Koteich 2008). It may be argued that the attacks on media institutions indicates that the May assaults led by Hezbollah were not only intending to force the government to back off, but rather it was a knockout blow to all those who oppose Hezbollah's agenda in Lebanon, whether they were individuals, groups, political parties or institutions.

Being unable to have the army nor any of the security forces involved in enforcing the rule of law or defending the government against such assaults, and being unable to offer any kind of organized "armed resistance" on the ground, the government, and consequently the March 14<sup>th</sup> leaders, managed only to issue strong spoken responses which had no effect in reality. It was clear, as Nasrallah said that a new era was being imposed. On one side, there was an exhausted, disjointed and scattered government, and on the other side, there was an armed, organized, trained and coherent organization aware of exactly what it was planning for.

With west Beirut being under siege, and the government being confronted, an internal solution to the crisis seemed impossible. However, there were attempts to initiate a compromise between both Hezbollah and the government with the help of foreign go-betweens. A day following an Arab League delegation's visit, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May, an agreement was reached, in which the biggest defeat of the government and the March 14<sup>th</sup> was chronicled , since 2005. According to that agreement, which happened under the conditions announced in Nasrallah's press conference, the government had to annul its decisions, in exchange for "paving the way for a possible return to normalcy in the capital and elsewhere."<sup>106</sup> With the soldiers of Hezbollah and its allies still in the streets,

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<sup>106</sup>Lebanon: Hizbollah's Weapons Turn Inward - Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°23, 15 May 2008

the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition leaders as well as Hezbollah's representatives, were invited to Qatar to reach a solid Agreement. Nathan J. Brown, a professor of Political Science and International Affairs at George Washington University, puts it as follows:

*“The Qatar-negotiated May 21, 2008 Doha accord amicably ended the opposition's military takeover of Beirut and organized a political settlement of the political crisis. The sit-in in Beirut's central district was ended the same day the Accord was signed. The Doha accord opened the way for the election of the consensus presidential candidate, army Commander General Michael Suleiman on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008 and the formation on July 11, 2008 of a national unity government, one in which the opposition possessed veto power”* (Brown, N. J., & Shahin, E. E. 2010: 145-146 ).

It can be argued that the Doha agreement did not end the opposition's military takeover of Beirut “amicably”, as argued by Brown, since the political settlement that was reached to end the political crisis happened according to Hezbollah's conditions. In other words, the political settlement that was reached happened according to the conditions of the winner on the ground, which “amounted to a significant shift of power in favor of the militant Shiite group Hezbollah and its allies” (Worth & Bakri 2008). The Doha agreement, sided with the point view of the militias, rather than the point view of the state. Consequently, the Doha agreement led to a situation where the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition waived its parliamentary majority, through accepting, by force, that Hezbollah, be not just a decision maker in future governments, but also a side that has the ability and the right to interrupt any decision that does not fit with its political agenda. It can be argued that what happened after the Doha Agreement is a complete submission to the *de facto* authority logic, and thus an obvious failure of all the slogans that were raised to support the logic of the state. Thus, the agreement can be described as a rock on which all the dreams, hopes and political slogans of the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition were shattered.

In 2009, another parliamentary election took place. The people who supported the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition in earlier years decided to grant them a parliamentary majority once more. But again, the agenda which the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition raised in 2005, and

once more in 2009, went down the drain. The blocking third veto in the cabinet which was granted to Hezbollah and its allies for the first time in Doha agreement was given again to them. The failures of the parliamentary majority in implementing its political slogans made them incapable of doing anything to curb Hezbollah. In other words, Hezbollah's tutelage on the State, which was imposed through the May 2008 attacks and then legitimized through Doha agreement, and the subordination of the majority to these pressures, made the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition a parliamentary majority that cannot meet the promises it made to the people, and thus gave Hezbollah an extra chance to control the Lebanese public sphere and national political ground.

The March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition leaders claim that they faced some obstacles which made them unable to meet their promises. One of which is demonstrated by Saad Hariri, the former prime minister and head of the 2005 and 2009 parliamentary majority, who argues that when on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 2005 people went down to the streets and started demonstrating and calling for a democratic Lebanon some politicians did not understand what the people were calling for, while others understood but didn't know how to achieve it. Hariri says that there was a part of Lebanon which did not witness the cedar revolution of 2005, and since they (the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition) believed in democracy and dialogue, they decided to extend their hands to those who were elsewhere. However, the others, referring to Hezbollah and its allies, did not extend their hands back to share their vision in establishing a democratic country. Hariri concludes by stating that the weapons of Hezbollah not only are a Lebanese problem but also a regional one, arguing that no one in Lebanon is able to negotiate that issue (Hariri 2008).

While Marwan Hamadeh MP, the former Lebanese Minister of Telecommunications, who was injured in a car bomb explosion on October 1<sup>st</sup> 2004, which it marked the beginning of a series of assassinations of Lebanese politicians and journalists, argues that the battle in Lebanon is simply a battle between the idea of a Lebanese state, one army, one president, one foreign policy, and the parallel state of Hezbollah. Hamadeh believes that that some form of partition has been made and implemented since there are areas that are not subject to the rules of the Lebanese state, the security and the military of Hezbollah are in this category. In addition, he argues that Hezbollah's foreign policy is outside the laws of the state and is a totally independent concept. Moreover, on one side, Hamadeh argues that it is true that Hezbollah is a part of the state, part of the

government , part of the parliament and the Lebanese institutions , but on the other side, it runs its own state , it has its own government , its own leader , and above their leader a supreme guide that God inspired, with whom it is almost impossible to fight with since, according to their beliefs, he is not a leader that was assigned through a law voted by human-beings but one assigned through his ‘divine right’ from God. Hezbollah, according to Hamadeh, has penetrated everything and managed to cover all the country with a parallel telecom system, parallel security system, parallel finance system and a parallel cultural system, i.e. their own schools. Hamadeh concludes by demonstrating that “Hezbollah is trying to copy the Iranian system even in the ways and means, even in the Sit-ins, even in the way they attack others, .i.e. uses motorcycles. It is the Tehran phenomena of the 1978 and 1979, and I think we are seeing the blue print of the Iranian system” (Hamadeh 2009).

Walid Junblatt MP, the current leader of the Progressive Socialist Party and the leader of Lebanon's Druze community, believes that Lebanon, in comparison with the Arab world, is a democratic country. However, compared to the western democratic countries, Lebanon is not. Believing that the mood of the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition does not tend to make any change in the current Lebanese regime, Junblatt argues that, on the one side, Hezbollah is an obstacle to democracy, but on the other side, he doesn't see the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition accepting a modern democratic system, .i.e. one man one vote. Regarding the weapons of Hezbollah, Junblatt feels that whilst they are not an obstacle to vote, they are obstacle for democracy to prosper. He concludes by arguing that “we have to wait until regional circumstances are better so then, by dialogue, Hezbollah will surrender” (Junblatt 2009).

Professor Tarek Mitri, the former minister of information, who believes that Lebanon has the democratic structure of a democracy, argues that the process of democratization, both social and economic democratization has been affected and delayed by the wars Lebanon has had in the last thirty years. He states that in the last thirty years, the Lebanese were busy making and negotiating compromise solutions for their crises, and these solutions were reached through means which are outside the political democratic process. Mitri demonstrates that the Doha agreement of 2008 was one of those solutions that had little to do with the norms of democracy. Concerning Hezbollah, Mitri argues that the armed organization which is loyal to Iran looks at the democratic process as a

mean to achieve a higher goal, i.e. the ‘sacralization’ of its weapons and arms. Mitri who believes that democratic competition is about who serves better for the good of the public, says that if the only solution for Hezbollah is that they keep their arms, then this reveals a setback in their understanding of democracy and for the process of democracy itself. Furthermore, he expresses his worries regarding the weapons by saying:

*“I am worried about the sacralization of weapons. I mean, weapons are weapons, they are means to a noble cause, but they are not a noble cause in themselves. If you use the arms to defend yourself against your enemy, then this is fair, but to reach a point where you use the arms to defend the arms, this is too much. It is an ethical question, and I oppose any sacralization of the arms. Arms are what they are, they are an evil, and we worship God, not arms” (Metri 2009).*

Some of the March 14<sup>th</sup> leaders can easily diagnose the problem in Lebanon, indeed some of them are fully aware of its complexity and roots. Additionally, they realize that a sovereign, independent and democratic Lebanese state cannot be built with the presence of Hezbollah’s state-within-the-state. In some parts of the interviews mentioned above, it was clear that the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition leaders were courageous enough to undertake self-criticism, and disapprove of some of their policies since 2005, for example Hariri. While Walid Junblatt, who later resigned from the political coalition, was very clear in his criticism to the latter. In the interview that was conducted with him before leaving the coalition, Junblatt did not see that his colleagues were serious enough to implement their political slogans regarding democracy. He came to this conviction after witnessing, at that period of time; some of the March 14<sup>th</sup> leaders accepting certain adjustments on the electoral law, which came to reflect their own interests, but not democratic values. Junblatt argued that Lebanon, compared to the Arab World, is a democratic country, while if compared to the Western one, then it is not. Perhaps, Junblatt, in this case, indicates that Lebanon, in comparison with its neighbours, has a sort of respect for some of democracy’s rituals, like elections, although not considering whether they are conducted properly or not, freedom, although not considering whether it is fully respected or not, in addition to the institutions that constitute the Lebanese political system. But when it comes to comparing Lebanon with the Western world, Junblatt’s argument indicates that Lebanon is far from meeting any of democracy’s requirements. Marwan Hamadeh emphasised, in the interview conducted with him,

Syrian hegemony as well as Hezbollah's expansion inside Lebanon. Hamadeh was clear in showing that Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed armed organisation, is sabotaging and impeding any possible progress and development of the Lebanese political system. Moreover, Hamadeh who believes that Hezbollah is trying to imitate the Iranian system in Lebanon hinted that Hezbollah is an obstacle to the political coalition he belongs to, and restricts their ability to apply their political slogans and agenda. Tarik Metri, who is not a March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition member, but an ally who believes in democratic values, agrees with the research's point of view, which states that Lebanon has elements of the democratic structure of a democracy. Furthermore, Lebanon has some very basic features of democracy, such as elections etc., but it has not attained the level whereby it can be described as a democratic country, given the internal and external factors that hinder it. Metri indicates that the illegal weapons are one of the main obstacles in Lebanon, which prevent the country from developing institutions and its political system in a form that corresponds with democratic values.

## **6.5 Two Scenarios of Governance**

### **(a). Hezbollah into Power**

In 2007, the Secretary General of Hezbollah addressed the Lebanese state and the ruling party at that time with the statement: "When you become a state, come and ask us not to be a state within a state".<sup>107</sup> Nasrallah, who is known in Lebanon as a seasoned political and martial leader, did not publicize such a talk in vain. Nasrallah evidently recognizes that his party is stronger than the state, and that it does not need more than a Lebanese state that gives his armed organisation some kind of legitimacy, either by turning a blind eye to its activities, or at maximum, supporting its political spectrum. In other words, on one side, Hezbollah, who is strong enough to be able to impose appointing ministers that failed in parliamentary elections, does not need to govern Lebanon directly, as in the case when its opponents govern. Hezbollah knows that the state cannot marginalize

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<sup>107</sup> <http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&article=414249&issueno=10359>

its role or disarm it by force, and thus, will turn a blind eye on its activities. On the other side, Hezbollah knows that if its allies rule, then it will be able to pass its policies without any obstacle at all, and therefore, it would be a legitimate party running the country from behind the scenes.

In short, Hezbollah is acquainted with the fact that governing the country directly, in the light of the diversity that Lebanese society enjoys, is not a possible mission, or a task that requires abandoning a lot of its political and religious beliefs. However, this does not mean that Hezbollah is frugal in achieving such a goal. But, as long as the state's authority stops at the border drawn by the Hezbollah, and as long as the authority of the whole state remains a hostage which is not allowed to exceed the margin laid down by the armed organisation, the safest option for Hezbollah remains to upholding and to stick to the current gains and powers that it is enjoying.

#### **(b). The March 14 into power**

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of May 2008, Lebanon witnessed an armed assault on the State, the parliamentary majority and the citizens. Such an assault, was able to impose *de facto* by force, and resulted in the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition losing its political battle, as well as retreating in its political agenda announced in both 2005 and 2009. However, the blame does not only fall on Hezbollah's strength and determination alone, but it also falls on the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition, which was too weak to achieve what it called for, and therefore too weak to put an end to Hezbollah's ambitions. It can be argued that the decline started in 2005, the year which marked the establishment of the independence movement. Instead of imposing the rule of Law, the governing majority decided to negotiate on how to apply and enforce the rule of law, which, consequently, exposed to Hezbollah not the principles that the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition held, but the fragility of the mechanism being used to apply them. The initiative for dialogue which the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition accepted and approved, between those who call for the application of law, the restoration of state sovereignty and the establishment of a democratic political system based on freedom, justice and equality, and against those who speak of breaking the rule of law and insist on violating the state's sovereignty, marked a clear breakup for its true independence and its democratic dynamic project. The dialogue which the parliamentary majority chose marked a decline in the momentum of the change it called



for. It was an incongruous gamble to think of accommodating Hezbollah in the state system, especially in light of the clear political slogans that the latter rises. Moreover, the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition's parliamentary majority made a mistake when it considered Hezbollah as an exceptional case that represents that entire Shiite community, without taking into consideration that this party did not get the popular majority in this community in any of the recent parliamentary elections. In addition, the biggest mistake that the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition committed, which overthrew everything it stood for over the years, was diminishing the government decisions and going after the May 7<sup>th</sup> attacks, to Doha, to draft an agreement based on concession to those who oppose the rule of law. The March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition, as a governing political coalition, did not waive some of its rights by doing so, but waived the rights of the state which it was governing.

In short, after the events that took place on March 14<sup>th</sup> 2005, the democratic process in Lebanon was moving ahead, but in a step which contrasted to the will of the people, the March 14<sup>th</sup> political coalition decided to regress. The March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition could not, despite its full familiarity with the fact that excessive settlements and waivers affect the prestige of the state and, therefore, strengthen the logic of the illegality, achieve any of what they had called for and promised. However, the weakness that prevailed in the performance of the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition was, in addition to the aforementioned, a result of the absence of the balance of power in Lebanon. Hezbollah, because of its both its determination and strength, was able to demonstrate the inability of the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition in governing Lebanon. However, if the balance of power in Lebanon could be restored, starting with the disarming of Hezbollah, then the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition may have the opportunity to apply its political agenda and slogans which call for the building of a just, sovereign, democratic and modern Lebanese state.

## **7. Chapter Seven: Conclusion**

Sadly, the vague and ambiguous Lebanese model of “democracy” resembles that of world politics; it is basically complex and to a certain extent, chaotic. Most of the political parties, including the so-called secular parties which, to a certain extent, have

tried to overcome confessional obstacles, fail to demonstrate a national agenda. In many cases they also remain subjected to various foreign political and ideological influences coming from both regional and non-regional countries. Such Political parties in Lebanon face a deep problem which stems from them opposing the concept of democracy when dealing with Lebanon's internal issues. In other words, the prevailing model that these political parties are part of fundamentally opposes democracy, and the structure of these parties defies the actual mechanisms of representative democracy as well as the Lebanese liberal democratic aspirations.

Initially, when dealing with the case of Lebanon, I was hesitant to apply any of the described theories relating to democracy. This hesitancy emanated from the lack of democracy theories that deal with non-sovereign states. Sovereignty is well-connected to democracy as it includes the state's capability, and willingness, to maintain the rule of law and uphold political rights throughout its territory. In other words, a sovereign state is required for a democracy, and the challenges of providing a democracy cannot be overcome "unless the territorial entity is recognised as a sovereign state" (Linz & Stepan 1996:18).

Being a type of political governance, democracy needs the characteristics of a modern sovereign state to be applied. These characteristics include an administration capable of raising taxes, providing public services according to the needs of the electorate, and monopolising the legitimate use of force. With regard to Lebanon, it currently lacks state-like characteristics in some of its territories, and its government, regardless of whether it is elected democratically or not, is still not able to enforce a monopoly on the legitimate use of force in these territories. Nor is it able to collect, for example, taxes or properly run its judicial system. Thus, it can be argued that applying democracy would be very difficult, if not possible, given the absence of the features of most modern sovereign states.

This thesis examined the various obstacles to democracy in Lebanon as well as the country's political synthesis and the imbalance of power amongst the various political parties involved. Divided into seven main chapters, the thesis provided an overview and analysis of the Lebanese case, with some chapters based on secondary sources, while others were based on both secondary sources and primary sources collected during a research trip to Lebanon between 2008 and 2009.

Chapter one detailed the research aims, objectives and the methodology of the thesis, as well as a literature review. The first part of this review focused on existing works on democracy and political culture. A number of major studies on political culture and democracy were surveyed, in an attempt to find out how, after the Second World War, some nations came to support democratic systems while other nations turned to authoritarian regimes, and also the interaction of the citizens with the political process. In this chapter, a relevant literature on the culture of the Arab world and Islam was reviewed. Moreover, a literature review was conducted on the political history of Lebanon, from independence, through the war of Lebanon, leading to the post-Taif Accord, and ending with the major transitions that took place after the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri. A literature review of democracy in Lebanon then followed, as I aimed to study the history of democracy in the country, and in particular where it succeeded and where it stalled.

Chapter Two provided a historical background wherein the main concepts and definitions of democracy were discussed. Subsequently, it provided an overview of the various approaches regarding the study of democracy and democratization. Also, this chapter analysed and investigated the notion of democracy and the main phases it has gone through since records began. Moreover, the chapter outlined some of the theoretical aspects of democracy, along with its practical tools and procedures.

Chapter three discussed the development of Lebanon as a nation-state since 1943 when it first gained independence from the French mandate. Moreover, it discussed the French mandate of Lebanon, the 1926 constitution, and some of its articles that respected, recognized and documented democratic principles of governance and the gradual transition from the Mandate Era to the independent state. Additionally, the chapter assessed the way the Lebanese political system functioned before and after the civil war. Furthermore, it tried to draw a link between the operation of the Lebanese institutions and upholding democracy through examining whether the functioning of those institutions supported the democratic functioning of the state or failed to do so. It also discussed the institutional synthesis of the Lebanese political system and how the translation of the constitutional structure reflected the stability of the current model of “democracy”. In this chapter, it became clear that the Lebanese state was able to regain some sense of stability as a result of the Taif agreement, but this was not harnessed to

help stabilise Lebanon's sovereignty or to properly rebuild its democratic institutions. Political leaders did not act in unison after the agreement and did not follow the conditions it laid out for re-establishing the institutions of state on a firm foundation. In fact, what did emerge in Lebanon was a series of dysfunctional institutions that do not act in the public interest, but are rather rife with corruption and unnecessary extravagance. They do not favour competence and integrity, but rather reward favouritism and blind subordination to political leaders and not to the interests of the state.

In Chapter Four I reviewed some of the internal barriers and hindrances that have impeded the development of an effective democratic system in Lebanon. The chapter examined how these hindrances shook and disturbed the approach for democracy in Lebanon. Furthermore, the chapter discussed the absence of the features of a modern sovereign state in Lebanon and how this has affected "democracy", arguing that achieving democracy and the presence of a sovereign state are interlinked. Also, it was noted in this chapter that sectarianism in Lebanon remains an obvious source of disruption for the stability of the Lebanese political system, and thus for democracy. Moreover, sectarianism as it currently exists, and without taking into consideration implementing the reforms concerning the abolition of sectarianism and political sectarianism outlined in the Taif agreement, proves itself a hindrance for the spreading of a democratic culture. Additionally, sectarian power sharing stands in contradiction with the principle of political equality of all Lebanese. It was also noted in this chapter that elections, as a key precondition for accessing democracy, sometimes become a key regime survival strategy and, therefore, are no longer in themselves sufficient evidence of a true and efficient democracy. In Lebanon, elections certainly do not seem to be a source of promoting democratic life and fostering the so-called democratic system. Moreover, for democracy to be functioning properly, competitive elections should take place. In addition, if democracy "means only that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to rule them," (Davenport & Armstrong 2004:538-554) Lebanon's democracy is some distance from this definition, as most people do not play a key role in accepting or refusing candidates, due to the influences they are exposed to. In other words, if a parliamentary election takes place, and for example is overwhelmed by fraud and bribery, the results will not lead to the strengthening of democracy; on the contrary, they will lead to the death of democracy.

Finally, the chapter discussed Lebanon's on-going violations of human rights, especially of the refugees – many of whom are subject to racial discrimination. Since it is commonly agreed that a democracy is expected to lessen its willingness and capability to violate human rights, Lebanon's violation of refugees' human rights can be seen as another internal hindrance to democracy.

Chapter five focused on external hindrances to Lebanon's democracy. It examined how these external factors manipulated the Lebanese institutions, internal policies and foreign affairs. Moreover, it provided an analysis of how each one of these factors disturbed the application of democracy in Lebanon. As observed from this chapter, external interventions resulted in huge violations of Lebanese sovereignty. Moreover, external influences and interventions were, and still are, authoritative enough to influence domestic politics and to control the state's institutions. Moreover, external powers, when they become influential enough to determine domestic policies, often impede the right of citizens to decide about the system of government they prefer, or decide about the policies of their government. The chapter found that such interventions often result in a lack of the structures of a modern sovereign state in Lebanon. In addition, it was concluded in the chapter that if democracy means "rule of the people", then, does external intervention allow any role for the people to play? The "rule of the people" cannot go in parallel with foreign interference and occupation, and thus is no longer valid under these two conditions.

Chapter six tried to find the connection between Hezbollah and Iran, and shed light on the organic relationship between them. Moreover, it provided, in addition to what was discussed in Chapter four, a thorough account of Hezbollah –and its armed militia. Moreover, this chapter investigated the way this armed organisation managed to reach the stage where it became more powerful than the Lebanese state and its legitimate armed forces. The chapter discussed Hezbollah's opponents in Lebanon, mainly the political parties which gathered under the umbrella of a political coalition called the March 14 coalition. It also examined how Lebanon has now become clearly divided into two rival factions, each with its own political agenda. Finally, this chapter analysed two possible scenarios of state governance in Lebanon.

It can be stated that the political system of governance in Lebanon, remains anything but a democracy; if a country is in the grip of an illegally armed organisation, even with

the existence of some signs of democracy, it is not possible to maintain a democratic system operating under the rule of law that governs the interaction and co-existence of all citizens and creates the basic conditions through which they can pursue and guarantee their civil rights. Thus, with the existence of an abusive use of power by a certain group, and with the lack of a state's monopoly of power, it remains impossible to apply the rule of law that guards and observes the maintenance of democracy. Consequently, in such a chaotic kind of system, applying democracy remains a mere dream.

Though being a cornerstone of democracy, the rule of law is still absent in Lebanon. The rule of law as it is commonly understood, enables democracy to ensure the maintenance of human rights, to create a lively civil and political society, to restore public confidence in the state's institutions, judicial system, and above all in an accountable government. However, in Lebanon, the situation does not conform to these rules. For it can be clearly seen that some citizens fear for their safety and do not have an equal say in matters concerning their lives. Unelected "political leaders" can wilfully apply their policies by force, thus rendering parts of the country off-limits to state control. In addition, illegal, arbitrary weapons exist everywhere as part of an illegitimate governing body, and the results of elections when even conducted, are not respected. Indeed, those in power have usually been supported or installed by foreign powers, and political assassinations remain a means of removing political opponents, resulting in a state where sovereignty is violated, and where freedom is not fully protected. Furthermore, fringe institutions similar to those run by the state continue to exist and often do so in order to compete with the state. Moreover, the situation continues to allow proxy wars to be launched in Lebanon without the parties involved having permission from the Lebanese Government or without conducting any referendum among the Lebanese people. Thus, as it stands, in a state such as this, there is currently not much left for the legitimate state to rule, govern or decide on policy.



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The 1926 Lebanese constitution Article 10

The 1926 Lebanese constitution Article 13

## Appendices



**Hadi El-Amine**  
**Ph.D Researcher**

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### **Ph.D Research Program / Fieldwork Interviews**

**Interview with : Saad El-Hariri / Former Prime Minister**

**Type of Interview : Recorded Semi-Structured Interview**

**Date : 12 / 11 / 2008**

**Time : 1:30 pm**

**Location : Beirut—Koraytem / Lebanon**

I have heard the summary presented about a PhD study being conducted by **M.Hadi El-Amine, PhD Researcher** from of the **Department of Government and International Affairs** at the **University of Durham** and I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study . I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I have been informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in this study, I may contact the Researcher a later date .

\* With full knowledge of all the aforementioned issues, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this interview.

☒ YES ☐ NO

\* I agree to have my interview audio recorded.

☒ YES ☐ NO

\* I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

☒ YES ☐ NO

Participant Name: Saad Hariri

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 12/11/2008

**Figure 4 Recorded Semi-Structured Interview: Former Prime minister Saad Hariri**

**Hadi El-Amine**  
**Ph.D Researcher**

**Ph.D Research Program / Fieldwork Interviews**

Interview with: **Walid Jounblat / PSP Leader, Head of Democratic Parliamentary Gathering**

Type of Interview : **Recorded Semi-Structured Interview**

Date : 08 / 11 / 2008

Time : 11 am

Location : Moktara / Lebanon

I have heard the summary presented about a PhD study being conducted by **M.Hadi El-Amine, PhD Researcher** from of the Department of **Government and International Affairs** at the **University of Durham** and I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study . I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I have been informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in this study, I may contact the Researcher a later date .

\* With full knowledge of all the aforementioned issues, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this interview.

☒ YES ☐ NO

\* I agree to have my interview audio recorded.

☒ YES ☐ NO

\* I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

☒ YES ☐ NO

Participant Name: WALID JOUNBLAT

Participant Signature: W. Jounblat

Date: 8 / 11 / 2008

**Figure 5 Recorded Semi-Structured Interview: Druze Leader Walid Junblatt**

**Hadi El-Amine**  
**Ph.D Researcher**

**Ph.D Research Program / Fieldwork Interviews**

**Interview with :** Samir Geagea / The head of the Lebanese Forces Party  
**Type of Interview :** Recorded Semi-Structured Interview  
**Date :** 22 / 10 / 2008  
**Time :** 1 pm  
**Location :** Meraab / Lebanon

I have heard the summary presented about a PhD study being conducted by **M.Hadi El-Amine, PhD Researcher** from of the Department of **Government and International Affairs** at the **University of Durham** and I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study . I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I have been informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in this study, I may contact the Researcher a later date .

\* With full knowledge of all the aforementioned issues, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this interview.

☒ YES ☐ NO

\* I agree to have my interview audio recorded.

☒ YES ☐ NO

\* I agree to the use of ~~anonymous~~ quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

☒ YES ☐ NO

Participant Name: Samir Geagea

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 22/10/2008

**Figure 6 Recorded Semi-Structured Interview: Samir Geagea Head of the Lebanese Forces Party**

**Hadi El-Amine**  
**Ph.D Researcher**

**Ph.D Research Program / Fieldwork Interviews**

**Interview with : Nassib Lahoud / Democratic Renewal Movement Leader .**

**Minister of Government**

**Type of Interview : Recorded Structured and Semi-Structured Interview**

**Date : 27 / 11 / 2008**

**Time : 1:00 pm**

**Location : Beirut / Lebanon**

I have heard the summary presented about a PhD study being conducted by **M.Hadi El-Amine, PhD Researcher** from of the Department of **Government and International Affairs** at the **University of Durham** and I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study . I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I have been informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in this study, I may contact the Researcher a later date .

\* With full knowledge of all the aforementioned issues, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this interview.

☒ YES ☐ NO

\* I agree to have my interview audio recorded.

☒ YES ☐ NO

\* I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

☐ YES ☐ NO

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Figure 7 Recorded Semi-Structured Interview: Nassib Lahoud - MP**

**Hadi El-Amine**  
**Ph.D Researcher**

**Ph.D Research Program / Fieldwork Interviews**

**Interview with :     Botros Harb / MP , Christian Magnate .**  
**Type of Interview : Recorded Semi-Structured Interview**  
**Date : 21 / 1 / 2009**  
**Time : 5:00pm**  
**Location : Beirut / Lebanon**

I have heard the summary presented about a PhD study being conducted by **M.Hadi El-Amine, PhD Researcher** from of the Department of **Government and International Affairs** at the **University of Durham** and I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study . I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I have been informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in this study, I may contact the Researcher a later date .

\* With full knowledge of all the aforementioned issues, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this interview.

☐ YES    ☐ NO

\* I agree to have my interview audio recorded.

☐ YES    ☐ NO

\* I agree to the use of quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

☐ YES    ☐ NO

Participant Name: HARB, BOUTROS

Participant Signature: [Signature]

Date: 21.01.2009

**Figure 8 Recorded Semi-Structured Interview: Boutros Harb - MP**



**Hadi El-Amine**  
**Ph.D Researcher**

**Ph.D Research Program / Fieldwork Interviews**

**Interview with : Marwan Hamadeh / Former Telecommunication Minister , MP .**

**Type of Interview : Recorded Semi-Structured Interview**

**Date : 21 / 1 / 2009**

**Time : 11:00AM**

**Location : Beirut / Lebanon**

I have heard the summary presented about a PhD study being conducted by **M.Hadi El-Amine, PhD Researcher** from of the Department of **Government and International Affairs** at the **University of Durham** and I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study . I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I have been informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in this study, I may contact the Researcher a later date .

\* With full knowledge of all the aforementioned issues, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this interview.

☒ YES ☐ NO

\* I agree to have my interview audio recorded.

☒ YES ☐ NO

\* I agree to the use of quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

☒ YES ☐ NO

Participant Name: MARWAN HAMADEH

Participant Signature: [Signature]

Date: 23/1/09

**Figure 9 Recorded Semi-Structured Interview: Marwan Hamadeh - MP**

**Hadi El-Amine**  
**Ph.D Researcher**

**Ph.D Research Program / Fieldwork Interviews**

**Interview with : Tarek Mitry / Minister of Information**  
**Type of Interview : Recorded Semi-Structured Interview**  
**Date : 05 / 01 / 2009**  
**Time : 05:00 pm**  
**Location : Beirut—Lebanon**

I have heard the summary presented about a PhD study being conducted by **M.Hadi El-Amine, PhD Researcher** from of the Department of **Government and International Affairs** at the **University of Durham** and I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study . I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I have been informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in this study, I may contact the Researcher a later date .

\* With full knowledge of all the aforementioned issues, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this interview.

☐ YES ☐ NO

\* I agree to have my interview audio recorded.

☐ YES ☐ NO

\* I agree to the use of ~~anonymous~~ quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

☐ YES ☐ NO

Participant Name: MITRY, TAREK

Participant Signature: [Signature]

Date: Jan 5, 2009

**Figure 10 Recorded Semi-Structured Interview: Tarek Metri - Former Minister**

## List of Publications

El-Amine, H. (2008): “An Fikh Al-Ta’asub wa Al-hukouma Al-natheefa”, *An-nahar Newspaper*, July 5

El-Amine, H. (2009): “Libano. Il Mio Amato Paese”, *Equilibri, Italy*, Anno XIII, No. 3, pp.436-440

El-Amine, H. (2009): “Wa Kaifa Uoussadeq Al-lubnanyoon”, *Almustaqbal Newspaper*, June 8.

El-Amine, H. (2009): “Notre résistance culturelle face au tumulte de leur résistance”, *Lorient Le Jour*, Bierut, 5/2009, pp.78-79.

El-Amine, H. (2010) : “Habibati al-dawla ... et la Syrie”, *Lorient Le Jour*, Bierut, 8/2010, pp.77-81.

El-Amine, H. (2011): “Libano: un’altra rivoluzione nell’aria?”, *Equilibri, Geopolitica per L’energia*, Italy, 2/2011, pp.330-336.

## List of Interviews

El-Amine, H. (2010): “Law Kanat Iran Sadika”, *March 14*, Beirut, February 17.

El-Amine, H. (2010): “Turkiyya Qadamat Li Gaza”, *March 14*, Beirut, June 18.

El-Amine, H. (2011): “Hezbollah Yazra’ Fi Thehn Munasereeh Fikrat Mua’adat Al-dawla”, Interview with *Kuwaiti newspaper Al-Siyasa*, August 1.

## List of Televised Interviews

El-Amine, H. (2010): “Interview on Wikileaks release discussing classified files of Syria, Hezbollah and in-between”, *Barada Channel of Syria*, London.

El-Amine, H. (2011): “Interview on Iran (the regime, Hezbollah, Hamas, Wilayat al Fakih) , Turkey ( emerging role in the Middle East, Peace process ) and Democracy in the Arab World”, *Barada Channel of Syria*, London.

El-Amine, H. (2011): “Interview on the Hezbollah of Lebanon, Shiaa and Iran”, *ANB Channel*, London.

El-Amine, H. (2011): “Interview on Shiaa and the Arab spring”, *ANB Channel*, London.